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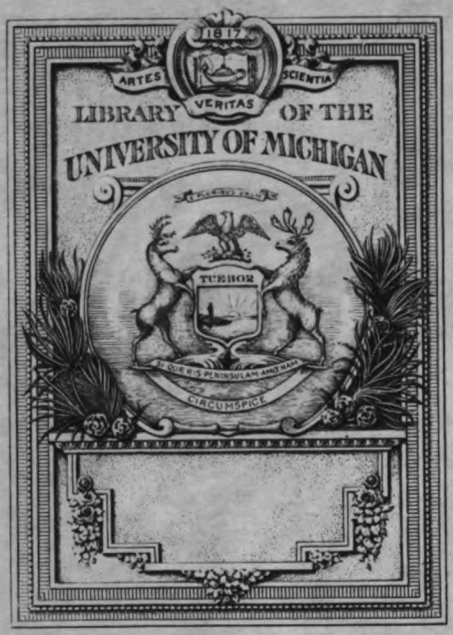

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THE WORKS OF HENRIK IBSEN

THE VIKING EDITION

VOLUME

XV

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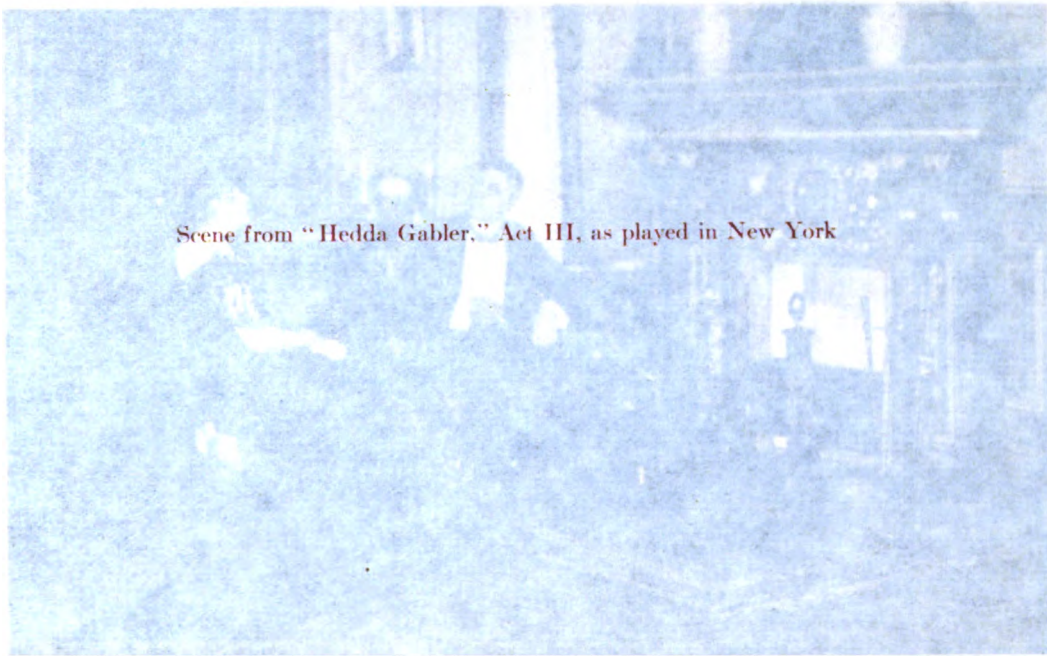

Scene from "Hedda Gabler," Act III, as played in New York

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HENRIK IBSEN

FROM IBSEN'S WORKSHOP

NOTES, SCENARIOS, AND DRAFTS OF THE MODERN PLAYS

PART II

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1912

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ROSMERSHOLM

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"WHITE HORSES"

He, the noble, refined nature, who has come round to a liberal point of view and from whom all his former friends and acquaintances have withdrawn. A widower; was unhappily married to a melancholy, half-mad wife, who ended by drowning herself.

She, his two daughters' governess, emancipated, warm-blooded, somewhat remorseless in a refined way. Is regarded by their acquaintance as the evil spirit of the house; is the object of misinterpretation and scandal.

Elder daughter; is in danger of succumbing to inactivity and loneliness; highly gifted, without any application for her talents.

Younger daughter; observant; dawning passions.

The journalist; genius, vagabond.

DRAFT

In the drawing-room of the parsonage. Dialogue between S. and Miss B. The student comes in from a walk. The old retired apothecary calls on business; goes away. The family assembled. The cavalry captain. The magistrate and his daughter come to call and bring an invitation; it is accepted; then the change of views is to be disclosed. The family alone; conversation turns on the white horses.

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DRAFT

1st Act

In the drawing-room of the country house. The clergyman and the young lady;

She is an intriguer and she loves him. She wishes to be his wife and she pursues this end with determination. Then he finds this out and she frankly admits it. There is now no more happiness in life for him. The dæmonic in his nature is awakened by pain and bitterness. He desires to die, and she is to die with him. She does so.

I

FIRST ACT

Sitting-room at Boldt-Römer's. The room is old-fashioned but comfortable. On the right a large stove; farther back a door. In the back wall, a double door opening into the hall. To the left, two windows, with flowers in pots on the window-frames. By the farther window, a table with a sewing-machine; in the corner, on the right, a sofa with a table and easy chairs. On the walls, old family portraits, representing officers and clergymen. It is afternoon. The sun is shining into the room.

(Boldt-Römer *is sitting in a rocking-chair in front of the stove, reading a magazine.* Miss Radeck *sits over by the window, working at the sewing-machine.*)

Boldt-Römer (*letting his book drop*). H'm, it is strange for all that.

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MISS RADECK (*looking at him*). What is it you mean?

BOLDT-RÖMER. It is strange for me to be sitting here —in Easter week—without anything to attend to; without anything to be responsible for.

MISS RADECK. But don't you feel that is a relief?

BOLDT-RÖMER. Yes, you may be sure I do. It's only at first—. Where are the girls to-day?

MISS RADECK. I expect they're down at the mill-pond skating.

BOLDT-RÖMER (*rising*). I didn't like to say so before. For they must have some amusement. But I so greatly dislike their skating down on the pond.

MISS RADECK. Oh, there's no danger at all. It's not so deep; and besides, the ice is perfectly safe.

BOLDT-RÖMER. I know that; it isn't *that* I was thinking of.

MISS RADECK (*looking at him*). I see, it's on account of—the other thing?

BOLDT-RÖMER. Yes. I think there is something uncanny in the children skating and playing and making a noise just over the spot that was their mother's death-bed.

MISS RADECK. But the girls know nothing about that.

BOLDT-RÖMER. No; but we know about it unfortunately; and therefore I cannot get rid of—. Well, well, I know of course it's meaningless; nothing but a sort of prejudice, or whatever we may call it; but nevertheless——

MISS RADECK. Then you haven't got over that kind of thing yet?

BOLDT-RÖMER. I doubt if I shall ever get over it entirely.

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MISS RADECK. Then you ought to try whether you cannot recover your former standpoint.

BOLDT-RÖMER. That? Never while I'm alive! That I neither can nor will do.

MISS RADECK. At all events it would have been better for you if you had never left it.

BOLDT-RÖMER. And *you* can say that? To *me?* To me, who never knew what it was to be happy until I had achieved spiritual emancipation.

MISS RADECK. Oh, you have a long way to go yet before you achieve complete emancipation. I believe it would have been better for you if I had never entered your door.

BOLDT-RÖMER. Then what should I have been now?

MISS RADECK. What you were before.

BOLDT-RÖMER. Yes, that is true. A creature without breadth of vision; without the least understanding of the life of reality that is struggling and working around us.

MISS RADECK. Ah, but for all that; with a nature so gentle as yours; and then all that you have inherited and that has left its mark on you. Oh no, it's not so easy—. (*Looks out.*) Look; here comes the Rector.

BOLDT-RÖMER. Who is it?

MISS RADECK. Your brother-in-law.

(RECTOR HEKMANN *enters from the hall.*)

HEKMANN. But what is this I see in the papers?

ROSENHJELM. Have the papers come?

HEKMANN. Yes, and they say you have resigned your living.

ROSENHJELM. I've been thinking of it for a long time. I cannot continue. It is impossible.

HEKMANN. One can understand very well that you cannot associate yourself with all these gloomy pietistic

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tendencies that have gained the upper hand in so many circles. But isn't it then your duty to counteract——

ROSENHJELM. Not as a clergyman. I cannot continue in that position.

H. That I don't understand.

R. I ought never to have taken orders. Nor was it of my own free will that I did so. But, you see, it was a family tradition. The Church and the Army by turns—from father to son. And as my father was a soldier, it was perfectly natural that I should take up theology. At that time I thought myself that it was as it should be.

H. And now you had become so firmly fixed in it. What will you turn to now—in the prime of life?

R. Well, I have all the affairs of the estate——

H. That won't fill up your time; and you have a steward and tenants too. No, it's no use making any more excuses. You must and shall take part in public life.

R. I had been thinking of that too—in my own way.

H. Not in any private way of your own. You must enter the ranks of the party. You can see well enough how great a need there is. Choose a special line. Oppose this Mortensgård who's stirring up all the ignorant mob. And now I hear he is thinking of starting a paper.

R. Is he? Well, the man has gifts. He knows how to write and speak.

H. Oh, my dear fellow, that's an easy matter when a man is not too particular as to the truth or the facts.

R. Well, I know so little of the facts in such matters.

H. But I know them. And I have had occasion to verify this Mortensgård. He is one of the most unprincipled pettifoggers we have in these parts. And that's saying a good deal, I can tell you.

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R. But is it not the fact that these Radicals have accomplished much good in the last few years?

H. That I will never admit as long as I live. They? What good should they accomplish? Can any good come from such an impure source?

R. But have we the right to be so positive in our judgment of the source?

H. Don't carry your humanity to extremes, my dear Rosenhjelm. And what is the good you have discovered? Perhaps you allude to the demagogues' *coup d' État?*

R. I don't understand such matters. But it seems to me that there is rather more independence in the ideas of individuals.

H. And you reckon that a good thing among people who are so unstable and immature? I think you are considerably mistaken. And I must say I am greatly surprised to hear such words from you. You who, after all, have inherited all your family's respect for authority and good order.

R. Who knows?—perhaps one cannot altogether avoid being infected by the time one lives in.

H. Still I hope that will never be the case with either you or me. We will keep ourselves unstained. Will we not, Rosenhjelm?

R. To keep one's self unstained, so far as possible, is undoubtedly the task of everyone.

H. Yes, and to spread purity around one, or in any case to keep contamination at a distance.

R. There I certainly agree with you.

H. Well, then you must also join us in acting, taking part in public life, combating all these fatal tendencies——

R. But, my dear fellow, if one is not made for any of this?

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H. In a cultured society everyone is made to be a citizen.

R. Everyone?

H. I mean, of course, everyone who has the necessary qualifications, everyone who possesses a certain modicum of education and intelligence, I don't ask for actual scholarship. But ordinary education and knowledge one ought really to be able to demand. Now *that* is what it would be so extremely beneficial to bring home to the masses.

II

WHITE HORSES

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

HENRIK IBSEN

1886

FIRST ACT

An old-fashioned, but large and comfortable sitting-room at ROSMER'S. *On the right, a stove; farther back, on the same side, a door. In the back wall, folding-doors opening into the hall. To the left, two windows, with flowers in pots on a stand. Beside the stove a sofa with table and easy chairs. On the walls, old family portraits representing officers and clergymen. It is late afternoon. The winter sun shines into the room.*

(MRS. ROSMER *is standing by the farthest window, arranging the flowers.* MADAM HELSET *enters from the right with a basket of table linen.*)

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MADAM HELSET. I suppose I had better begin to lay the tea-table, ma'am?

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, please do. He must soon be in now.

MADAM HELSET (*laying the cloth*). No, he won't come just yet; for I saw him from the kitchen——

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, yes——

MADAM HELSET. —on the other side of the mill-pond. At first he was going straight across the foot-bridge; but then he turned back——

MRS. ROSMER. Did he?

MADAM HELSET. Yes, and then he went all the way round. Ah, it's strange about such places. A place where a thing like that has happened—there—. It stays there; it isn't forgotten so soon.

MRS. ROSMER. No, it is not forgotten.

MADAM HELSET. No, indeed it isn't.

(*Goes out to the right.*)

MRS. ROSMER (*at the window, looking out*). Forget. Forget, ah!

MADAM HELSET (*in the doorway*). I've just seen the Rector, ma'am. He's coming here.

MRS. ROSMER. Are you sure of that?

MADAM HELSET. Yes, he went across the mill-pond.

MRS. ROSMER. And my husband is not at home.

MADAM HELSET. The tea is ready as soon as you want it.

MRS. ROSMER. But wait; we can't tell whether he'll stay.

MADAM HELSET. Yes, yes. (*Goes out to the right.*)

MRS. ROSMER (*goes over and opens the door to the hall*). Good afternoon; how glad I am to see you, my dear Rector!

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RECTOR GYLLING (*taking off his overcoat*). Thanks. Then I am not disturbing you?

MRS. ROSMER. Oh no, how can you think so? On the contrary.

RECTOR GYLLING (*coming in*). Well, that's all right. But where's your husband?

MRS. ROSMER. He has only gone for a little walk. I think he'll be in directly. Won't you sit down till he comes?

GYLLING (*sits down by the stove*). Many thanks. There is something I should like to speak to him about.

MRS. ROSMER (*sits down at the table*). That is fortunate, for it has given us a chance of seeing you at last. How is it you haven't been near us before?

GYLLING. Oh, it doesn't do to make oneself a nuisance to young married people.

MRS. ROSMER (*smiling*). H'm—we are not so very young, you know.

GYLLING. Well, newly-married anyhow. But I have been away too, as you know, for a couple of weeks.

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, we have heard of you at political meetings.

GYLLING. I've turned political agitator, as the radical papers call it—in speaking of *us*. Or perhaps you never see those papers?

MRS. ROSMER (*quickly*). Oh yes, we see them now and then——

GYLLING. Well, then you have seen, I suppose, how I have been abused and slandered? What rough treatment I have had to put up with?

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, but it seems to me you gave as good as you got.

GYLLING. So I did, though I say it that shouldn't. If I have to appear in public, I am certainly not the man

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to turn the other cheek.—But don't let us get upon the subject of that painful and irritating wrangle. Tell me now—how do you like being mistress of the house?

MRS. ROSMER (*in a lower tone*). I feel in every way so unspeakably happy.

GYLLING. Well, I'm heartily glad of it. Nor could it be otherwise. A husband like Eilert Rosmer! And then the fact that you do not find yourself amid strange surroundings which you have to accustom yourself to. For this house and everything belonging to it has been like a home to you for a long time. The only difference is that now it is all your own.

MRS. ROSMER (*moving a little nearer*). My dear Rector, you say that so sincerely that I cannot think there is any ill-feeling lurking in the background.

GYLLING. Ill-feeling? Why, what do you mean?

MRS. ROSMER. It would be only natural if you felt a little hurt at seeing another in possession, where you were accustomed to see your own sister until a year or two ago. But you don't feel that? (*Giving him her hand.*) Thanks, my dear Rector! Thanks, thanks for that!

GYLLING. But tell me, how on earth did you get such an idea into your head? That I should object—now that my poor sister is gone—that I should now object to your taking her empty place—to your making Rosmer happy—after all his melancholy experience—and to your being yourself happy after all your untiring care for her —for her, that poor irresponsible creature, who chose to —who ended by—leaving it all.

MRS. ROSMER. Oh, don't let us speak of these gloomy things. Don't let us think of them.

GYLLING. No, let us not. Let us keep to what is bright. Tell me now, Mrs. Rosmer—. But first one

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thing—; may I be allowed to call you Agatha, as she did?

MRS. ROSMER (*joyfully*). Oh yes, please do! (*Shaking his hands.*) Thanks, thanks for wanting to!

(EILERT ROSMER *comes in from the right.*)

MRS. ROSMER. Rosmer, do you see who is here?

ROSMER. Madam Helset told me. (*Pressing the* RECTOR'S *hands.*) Welcome back to this house, old friend. I knew that sooner or later things would come all right between us.

GYLLING. Why, man, do you mean to say you too have been so foolish as to fancy that I was on a strained footing with you?

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, only think, it was nothing but fancy after all.

ROSMER. Is that really the case, Gylling? Then why did you desert us so entirely?

GYLLING. Because my presence would always have been reminding you of the years of your unhappiness, and and of—the life that ended in the mill-pond.

ROSMER. Well, it was a kind and considerate thought of yours, Gylling. But I must tell you that it was altogether unnecessary. Neither Agnete nor little Alfred is a memory that it pains us to dwell upon. On the contrary. We often speak of them. We feel almost as if they still belonged to the household.

GYLLING. Do you really? Can you do that?

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, why not——?

ROSMER. It is quite natural. Both Agatha and I were so deeply attached to those who are gone. Oh, it is a great happiness to have nothing to reproach oneself with——

GYLLING. Henceforward, I declare I shall come out and see you every day.

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MRS. ROSMER. Oh, if you would do that!

ROSMER. I wish very much that our intercourse had never been interrupted. There are many things that I would give a great deal to talk over with you, quite frankly,—straight from the heart.

MRS. ROSMER. Ah yes, Rosmer! Do so now.

GYLLING. Oh I can tell you I have no less to talk to you about. I suppose you know I have turned agitator?

ROSMER. Yes, so you have.

GYLLING. It's quite impossible now for any thoughtful and right-minded man to stand idly looking on any longer. Now that the Radicals have really come into power, it is time for all well-disposed citizens to unite—it is high time, I say——

MRS. ROSMER (*with a suppressed smile*). Don't you think it may even be a little late?

GYLLING. Unquestionably it would have been better if we had checked the stream at an earlier point in its course. But who could foresee what was going to happen? Certainly not I. But now I have had my eyes opened once for all; for, would you believe it? now the spirit of revolt has crept into the school itself.

ROSMER. Into the school? Into your school?

GYLLING. I tell you it has. Into my own school. What do you think? It has come to my knowledge that the sixth-form boys—a number of them at any rate, have formed a society, and they take in Mortensgård's paper.

ROSMER. H'm——.

MRS. ROSMER. I have generally noticed that young men are not inclined to be Radicals.

GYLLING. Most of them are not. That is perfectly true. Most of us, thank God, are still at that age so far

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subject to respect for authority, both at home and in school, that we do not lend an ear to immature criticism of recognised institutions. But unfortunately there are exceptions to the rule. And to us schoolmasters it is a melancholy fact that the very boys who are best equipped with mental ability form the exceptions.

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, I have noticed that too.

GYLLING. But that makes them all the more dangerous, these few black sheep. They are capable of infecting my whole flock. The whole form. The whole school. You see, that is why I have not hesitated to take an active part in these political meetings and to warn people against the corrupt spirit that has appeared among us for the moment.

ROSMER. But have you any hope that the tide can be stemmed in that way?

GYLLING. At any rate I shall have done my duty as a citizen in defence of the State. And I hold it the duty of every right-minded man with an atom of patriotism to do likewise. In fact, that was my principal reason for coming out here to-day——

ROSMER. What? Do you mean that I should——?

MRS. ROSMER. But, my dear Rector, you know his distaste——

GYLLING. He must get over it. (*To* ROSMER.) You don't keep abreast of things. You cannot imagine the state things are in, all over the country. There isn't a single accepted idea that hasn't been turned topsy-turvy. It will be a gigantic task to get all the errors rooted out again.

ROSMER. I have no doubt of it. But I am the last man to undertake such a task.

MRS. ROSMER. Rosmer, I think it is time you spoke out frankly.

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GYLLING. You are too shy, Rosmer. You hold yourself too much aloof from life. You gave up your living——

ROSMER. Well, now I will speak. Why do you think I gave up my living?

GYLLING. Oh, I know that well enough. I don't think there was anything surprising in your feeling the unpleasantness of not being able to join in the pietistic tendencies which then found favour in so many circles here.

ROSMER. I ought never to have taken orders, never to have entered upon that class of studies; that is the main point.

GYLLING. But, my dear fellow, then you would have broken with one of the best and most unalterable traditions of your family. Eilert Hannibal Rosmer was a soldier. Consequently his son, Eilert Alfred Rosmer, had to be a clergyman. Thus it has alternated for over two hundred years. I am well acquainted with these things, from my work on the family pedigree.

ROSMER. Yes, and no doubt it was that which determined me in those days. Or rather, there was no question of a determination on my part. Father—h'm, you know he was a martinet in his family circle as well as in his regiment—father would have it so, and there was an end of it.

GYLLING (*with a sigh*). Ah, that was in the days of decent social conditions!

ROSMER. And I, unfortunately, must have belonged to the class of young men you were talking of just now—those with a poor mental equipment.

GYLLING. You! How on earth do you make that out?

ROSMER. Why, there wasn't a spark of rebellious spirit in me then.

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GYLLING. No, with God's help *that* spirit will never possess *you*.

ROSMER. Yet I have come to take a wider view of life than I used to.

GYLLING. Look here, Rosmer—surely you are not so weak as to be influenced by the accident that the leaders of the mob have won a temporary advantage?

ROSMER. I am little acquainted with these questions; but I confess it seems to me that within the last few years people are beginning to show greater independence of thought.

GYLLING. And what if they are? Would you really take that to be an improvement among unstable and immature people? But in any case you are quite mistaken. Or what kind of ideas and opinions are they that are rife among the malcontents in your rural district? Are they not the same ideas and opinions that excite the ill-disposed in the town? Yes, precisely. And do you suppose the mob sucks these ideas and opinions from its own breast? No, of course not—they find them in Peder Mortensgård's paper. And that's an appetising source to draw from!

MRS. ROSMER. It can't be denied that Mortensgård knows how to write.

GYLLING. Yes, but, good heavens—a man of his foul antecedents! Well, the Radicals are not very particular as regards moral character. That is why he is a dangerous man, this Mortensgård. He is one of the most dangerous we have here. And he may give us even more trouble in the future. For now he is thinking of enlarging his paper; it is to appear daily; I know on good authority that he is looking for a capable assistant.

ROSMER. But why don't you and the others think of starting a paper in opposition to him? Your friends in

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the town could provide the capital. I'm sure it would not be difficult——

GYLLING. Ah, now you've brought me to my real errand. That is the very thing we have thought of. As far as the money question is concerned, the undertaking is assured. But the conduct of the paper—the editing, Rosmer. Tell me—don't you feel it your duty to undertake it, for the sake of the good cause?

ROSMER. I!

MRS. ROSMER. Oh, how can you ask——!

GYLLING. I should be quite willing to try my hand at that style of work too; but it is altogether impossible. I have such a multitude of irons in the fire already. But for you, with no profession to tie you down——

ROSMER. In any case I have the management of the estate.

GYLLING. Nonsense; the management of your estate doesn't take up much of your time.

ROSMER. But nevertheless, it is quite impossible. I feel so altogether unsuitable—; I am not fitted——

GYLLING. You can never know that until you have tried. Besides, the rest of us would give you as much help as we could. And then, too, you start with an immense advantage in the unbounded prestige you enjoy in the whole county. No other man can compare with you in that respect. The name of Rosmer—good heavens—the family of Rosmer, that from time immemorial has stood as the symbol of all that is old and good and just and upright. That, you see, is just what will enable you to act with tenfold weight.—What do you say, Mrs. Rosmer?

MRS. ROSMER (*laughing*). My dear Rector, I can't tell you how ludicrous all this seems to me.

GYLLING. What do you say? Ludicrous?

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MRS. ROSMER. Yes, ludicrous,. For you must let me tell you frankly——

ROSMER. No, let me say it myself——

(MADAM HELSET *appears in the doorway on the right*).

MADAM HELSET. There's a man out in the kitchen passage says he wants to see Pastor Rosmer.

ROSMER. Oh? Ask him to come in.

MADAM HELSET. Into the sitting-room?

ROSMER. Yes, of course.

MADAM HELSET. But he looks scarcely the sort of man to bring into the sitting-room.

MRS. ROSMER. Why, what does he look like, Madam Helset?

MADAM HELSET. Well, he's not much to look at, ma'am.

ROSMER. Did he not give his name?

MADAM HELSET. Yes, he said his name was Uldric.

ROSMER. Ulric?

MADAM HELSET. Yes, and then he gave another name. I think it sounded like Rosen—holm, or something like that.

ROSMER. Ulric Rosen—? Surely it can't be Ulric Rosenhjelm?

MADAM HELSET. Yes, that's what he said.

MRS. ROSMER. That unfortunate Ulric Rosenhjelm.

GYLLING. That black sheep Rosenhjelm. So he's in these parts.

ROSMER. Ask him to come in, Madam Helset.

MADAM HELSET. Oh, very well. (*Goes out.*)

GYLLING. Are you really going to have an individual like that in your house?

ROSMER. I knew him a little in the days of his prosperity.

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MRS. ROSMER. Didn't you know him too, Rector?

GYLLING. Never personally. H'm——.

(MADAM HELSET *opens the door on the right for* ULRIC ROSENHJELM, *and then withdraws, shutting the door behind him. He has unkempt hair and beard, and is dressed like a common tramp. No overcoat; worn-out shoes; no shirt visible. He wears an old pair of black gloves; a bowler hat under his arm and a stick in his hand.*)

ROSENHJELM (*hesitates at first, then goes quickly up to the* RECTOR, *and holds out his hand*). How are you, Rosmer!

GYLLING. Excuse me; (*points*) *there*——

ROSENHJELM (*turns*). Right, yes; there he is. How are you, Rosmer. I could not pass by the house without paying you a visit.

ROSMER. Travellers are always welcome here.

ROSENHJELM. I had no card on me; but I hope the elderly lady I met outside has announced me? Well, that's all right. (*Bows.*) Ah, Mrs. Rosmer, of course. And *there*? A brother of the cloth, I see.

ROSMER. The Rector. Rector Gylling.

ROSENHJELM. Gylling? Gylling? Wait a bit; weren't you a student of philology?

GYLLING. Of course I was.

ROSENHJELM. Why, devil take it, then I knew you——

GYLLING. Pardon me——

ROSENHJELM. Weren't you——

GYLLING. Pardon me——

ROSENHJELM. —one of those who got me expelled from the Students' Club?

GYLLING. Certainly; but I disclaim any closer acquaintanceship.

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ROSENHJELM. Well, well; *nach Belieben, Herr Rector.* It's all one to me. I remain the man I am for all that.

MRS. ROSMER. You are on your way into town, Mr. Rosenhjelm?

ROSENHJELM. Yes, gracious lady, I am. I feel almost ashamed of not knowing this part of the country. What is the state of feeling in this town? You see, I'm thinking of getting up an evening entertainment.

MRS. ROSMER. What is it to consist of?

ROSENHJELM. Whatever may be to the taste of the public. Could you not give me some good advice, Rector? I will take the liberty of paying you a visit.

GYLLING. Thanks; but you'd better apply direct to Peder Mortensgård.

ROSENHJELM. Mortensgård? Don't know any Mortensgård. What sort of an idiot is he?

GYLLING. Why do you call the man an idiot, if you don't know him?

ROSENHJELM. Can't I tell at once by the name that it belongs to a plebeian?

GYLLING. Oh? I didn't expect that answer.

ROSENHJELM. Perhaps you think that Ulric Rosenhjelm hob-nobs with Tom, Dick and Harry?

GYLLING. So far as I know, you used to be specially interested in the lower orders of society.

ROSENHJELM. Yes, I was; and I had to suffer for it. Persecution from those in authority; ridicule, scorn and mockery from the thousands of indifferent people who will not understand anything—and ingratitude from the oppressed, whom I tried to help. Look at me. Here you see Ulric Rosenhjelm, who belonged to good society, to the best society—and who was the first in good society. They turned me out because I had the ability and the courage to say and write things that the polite world

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would rather have hidden. Now I never go into good society—except when I am alone.

GYLLING. It may not be merely ability or opposition that determine one's destiny. It may also be one's mode of life.——

ROSENHJELM. I understand. We have an official code of morality, and I have not lived in harmony with it. However, I am tired of *that* too. I will put on the new man, as it is written somewhere. Is there such a thing as a Temperance Society in the town? A Total Abstinence Society? I need scarcely ask.

GYLLING. Yes; I am the president.

ROSENHJELM. I saw that in your face! Well, it is by no means impossible that I may come to you and enroll myself as a member.

GYLLING. Yes; I must tell you that we don't receive everybody without further ceremony.

ROSENHJELM. *À la bonne heure!* Ulric Rosenhjelm has never forced himself into that sort of Society. But I must not prolong my visit. I must be on my way to the town and look out for a lodging. I presume there is a decent hotel in the place.

MRS. ROSMER. Mayn't I offer you anything before you go?

ROSENHJELM. Of what sort?

MRS. ROSMER. A cup of tea, or——

ROSENHJELM. No, no, thanks. I am always loath to trespass on private hospitality. Good-bye. Oh, by the way, Rosmer; for the sake of our old friendship, will you do me a service?

ROSMER. Yes, gladly. What is it?

ROSENHJELM. You see, I am travelling on foot. My things won't arrive till later. Will you lend me a shirt for a day or two?

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ROSMER. With all my heart. Is there nothing else?

ROSENHJELM. Could you spare an overcoat?

ROSMER. Yes, yes; certainly I can.

ROSENHJELM. And perhaps a pair of winter boots—I have nothing but spring shoes with me.

ROSMER. That I can manage too. As soon as you let me know your address, I will send the things in.

ROSENHJELM. Not on any account. So much trouble. I will take the trifles with me.

ROSMER. As you please. Come here with me then.

MRS. ROSMER. Let *me* go. Madam Helset and I will see to it. (*Goes out to the right.*)

ROSMER. Is there nothing else I can do for you?

ROSENHJELM. No, thanks. Well, yes, damn it, I'd forgotten—do you happen to have ten crowns in your pocket?

ROSMER. I expect so. (*Opens his purse.*) Here are fifteen.

ROSENHJELM. Well well, thanks, never mind. Thanks in the meantime. Remember you lent me fifteen. Good-bye, gentlemen.

(*Goes out to the right.* ROSMER *takes leave of him, and shuts the door behind him.*)

GYLLING. What do you think of that! This is what has become of the brilliant Ulric Rosenhjelm!

ROSMER. Unfortunately; I have known it a long time.

GYLLING. Yes, it was pretty well known. But to see it with one's own eyes! Such talent rendered useless by moral foulness—

ROSMER. Do you think he is past saving? Would it not be possible to raise him again?

GYLLING. Oh, my dear fellow, how could that be managed?

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ROSMER. I mean by going to work in a forebearing—kindly way with him, showing confidence in him, relying on his good intentions—[a kind of self-knowledge——]

GYLLING. Then you do rely on those intentions?

ROSMER. I would gladly do so.

GYLLING. In that case he might perhaps be useful to us. The brilliant style he was once master of—; his pitiless, slashing pen—; and it did not look as if he had any very friendly disposition towards the Radicals——

ROSMER. Do you mean that he might be placed in charge of the new paper?

GYLLING. In charge! Heaven preserve us, how can you think of such a thing! No, on the contrary, he would of course have to be kept in the background until he had rehabilitated himself. He would have to apply himself to leading a decent life,—in any case to be careful and to avoid public scandal. And if he could so far conquer himself, and if he could be induced for a certain time to lend the good cause his *bona officia*—; observing the strictest anonymity, of course——

(MRS. ROSMER *has re-entered in the meantime.*)

ROSMER. Has he gone?

MRS. ROSMER. Yes.

GYLLING. And now I must think about leaving too. It is beginning to get dark.

MRS. ROSMER. Won't you take tea with us?

GYLLING. No, no, thanks; I cannot.—Well, my dear friend, I won't press you further to-day. You must turn it over in your own mind——

ROSMER. Will you be at home to-morrow morning——?

GYLLING. To-morrow? I'm sorry I can't say for certain—for——

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ROSMER. Never mind, I'll enquire for you in any case. I want to talk to you, I want to have a long talk with you, my dear Gylling——

GYLLING. You mean about the affair of the *County News?*

ROSMER. About that and other things.

GYLLING (*shaking his hand*). You will be welcome, my dear friend. And I am sure you and I will soon agree as to what is the duty of a good and well-disposed citizen in these troublous times. Good-bye, Mrs. Rosmer! Good-bye, dear friends.

(ROSMER *and* MRS. ROSMER *accompany him into the hall. As he puts on his overcoat, loud conversation is heard, the words of which do not however reach the audience. Finally,* "Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye," *as the* RECTOR *goes.* ROSMER *and his wife re-enter the room.*)

MRS. ROSMER. What was that he was saying as I came in? I understood that he wanted to try Rosenhjelm on the new paper.

ROSMER. He threw it out casually as a possibility. But nothing is likely to come of it.

MRS. ROSMER. No, I should hope not. At all events I have done my best that nothing shall come of it.

ROSMER. You, my dear? What have you done?

MRS. ROSMER. Now you won't be vexed with me for acting on my own responsibility, will you? Such good friends as we are?

ROSMER. Of course not; you may do everything you wish. But what was it?

MRS. ROSMER. I gave Rosenhjelm a card of introduction to Mortensgård.

ROSMER. You did? To Mortensgård!

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MRS. ROSMER. Yes, I scribbled a few hurried words——

ROSMER. But you heard him call Mortensgård an idiot and a plebeian.

MRS. ROSMER. We needn't pay any attention to that. When a man has fallen so low as Rosenhjelm, he plays the gentleman. He thanked me too, and promised to deliver the card.

ROSMER. Oh, he did that? But perhaps Gylling will get hold of him to-morrow.

MRS. ROSMER. If he has already compromised himself with Mortensgård's paper, the *County News* won't be able to make use of him.

ROSMER. And then it will come out that it was we who recommended him.

MRS. ROSMER. What harm can that do? Haven't you made up your mind to have it out to-morrow?

ROSMER. Yes, that's settled. To-morrow it must and shall be done. But, dear me, how hard it is nevertheless to have to grieve one's faithful friends—to cause them real heartfelt sorrow.

MRS. ROSMER. Is that all, Rosmer? Is it not something that survives in you, without your knowing it?

ROSMER. My dear, what should it be? Do you mean uncertainty or doubt?

MRS. ROSMER. Not exactly that.

ROSMER. No, you may depend upon that. I feel so free, so sure of myself. (*Sits down beside her.*) You have faithfully helped me. My former self is dead. I look upon it as one looks upon a corpse.

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, but that is just when these white horses appear.

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ROSMER. White horses? What white horses?

(MADAM HELSET *brings in the tea-urn and puts it on the table.*)

MRS. ROSMER. What was it you told me once, Madam Helset? You said that from time immemorial a strange thing happened here whenever one of the family died.

MADAM HELSET. Yes, it's as true as I'm alive. Then the white horse comes.

ROSMER. Oh, that old family legend——

MRS. ROSMER. In it comes when the night is far gone. Into the courtyard. Through closed gates. Neighs loudly. Launches out with its hind legs, gallops once round and then out again and away at full speed.

MADAM HELSET. Yes, that's how it is. Both my mother and my grandmother have seen it.

MRS. ROSMER. And you too?

MADAM HELSET. Oh, I'm not so sure whether I've seen anything myself. I don't generally believe in such things. But this about the white horse—I do believe in that. And I shall believe in it till the day of my death. Well, now I'll go and—— (*Goes out to the right.*)

ROSMER (*after a short silence*). Do you mean that this can be applied to me?

MRS. ROSMER. All the emancipated people I have known—all those who believe themselves to be emancipated—every one of them has had somewhere or other a white horse like this, which they never give up believing in.

ROSMER. And complete emancipation, you think, means——

MRS. ROSMER. It means getting rid of one's white horses. [We must have light, Rosmer.]

MADAM HELSET [(in the doorway to the right)]. Here is the lamp, ma'am.

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SECOND ACT

The sitting-room at Johannes Rosmer's. It is forenoon. (ROSMER *is walking about the room and putting on his overcoat.* MRS. ROSMER *is brushing his hat, which she then hands to him.*)

ROSMER. To think that I could have been so cowardly, so shy, so afraid of telling them everything frankly.

MRS. ROSMER. Yes, was it not strange?

ROSMER. I don't understand it myself.

MRS. ROSMER. But now it is over. There now. Go straight in to the Rector.

ROSMER. I'm going straight in——

MRS. ROSMER. And then come back as soon as you can. I'm excited to hear what he will say.

ROSMER. Don't be too impatient. Good-bye for the present. Good-bye!

MRS. ROSMER. Good-bye, dear Rosmer!

(*He opens the door to the hall.* MRS. ROSMER *goes out with him. At the same moment* RECTOR GYLLING, *in outdoor clothes, comes into the hall.*)

ROSMER. What! Have you come here?

GYLLING. Yes, I have.

ROSMER. And I was just on my way to you.

GYLLING. I did not want to wait; and I was not so sure that you would come——

ROSMER. Well, take off your coat.

GYLLING. If you will permit me.

(*He takes off his overcoat and lays it on a chair.* ROSMER *does the same.*)

ROSMER. Is there anything wrong with you? You look so serious.

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GYLLING. I should be glad to speak to you in private. Could we go into your study?

MRS. ROSMER. It is not tidy yet. Stay here; I have to go out. (*Goes out to the right.*)

ROSMER. What is it then? Has Ulric Sejerhjelm been to see you?

GYLLING. No; and he's not likely to come either. But he is already being talked about. He introduced himself in a fine fashion.

ROSMER. Well?

GYLLING. He took up his quarters in a low house, spent the evening in a low tavern—in the lowest company of course—and drank and stood treat as long as he had any money; then he began abusing the whole company as a set of disreputable blackguards—and so far he was quite right;—whereupon they thrashed him and pitched him out of doors.

ROSMER. So he is incorrigible.

GYLLING. He had pawned the overcoat too; but I am told that has been redeemed for him. And can you guess by whom?

ROSMER. By whom then?

GYLLING. By Mr. Mortensgård. Sejerhjelm's first visit was to the "idiot" and "plebeian."

ROSMER. Rebecca prophesied that yesterday.

GYLLING. Indeed. And that brings me to a matter it is my duty to warn you about, for our old, faithful friendship's sake.

ROSMER. But, my dear Gylling, what can that be?

GYLLING. It is this: that there are things being done in this house independently of you and behind your back.

ROSMER. Who is doing this?

GYLLING. Your wife. I can quite understand it. Ever since the last sad years of Beata's life she has

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been accustomed to manage things here; but nevertheless——

ROSMER. My dear Gylling, you are utterly mistaken. Rebecca hides nothing from me. She tells me everything.

GYLLING. Then has she told you that yesterday she gave Sejerhjelm a card of introduction to Mortensgård?

ROSMER. Yes, of course.

GYLLING. She has—! And what do you say to that?

ROSMER. I altogether approve of what Rebecca has done.

GYLLING. Are you mad? You approve of her corresponding with the lowest and most dangerous opponent we have here?

ROSMER. I will tell you candidly. Mortensgård's conduct on many occasions has been repulsive to you. But I can no longer side with you and our friends on public questions. In those matters and in many others I must entirely dissociate myself from you.

GYLLING (*starting back*). What do you say! You, you will dissociate yourself from your friends! Go over to the enemy's camp! But that's impossible!

ROSMER. I am not thinking of taking any part in the conflicts of the day. I have a horror of interfering in all this hubbub, of which I do not know the ins and outs.

GYLLING. But what are you going to do then?

ROSMER. I will try to ennoble the work of emancipation. Do you think I don't see all the foulness that development brings with it and gives rise to in its course? That is what I want to oppose, to warn people against, to dam up, to confine, so that the stream may flow pure and clear——

GYLLING. Oh, Rosmer, what a confiding man you are! You don't know what elements you will have to

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deal with. But when was it that you entered on these paths of aberration?

ROSMER. I call it comprehension.

GYLLING. Call it what you will. But when, I ask?

ROSMER. It goes back a long time. I believe the foundation was laid when I was engaged on my theological studies.

GYLLING. And yet you entered the Church?

ROSMER. Our family has always had great respect for the conventional.

GYLLING. That quality appears to be dying out in the family.

ROSMER. I think such things always die out—sooner or later—and then there is a reaction to the opposite.

GYLLING. But that this should come about through you! And that with such a turn of mind you could accept the position of a clergyman——

ROSMER. But as soon as I was perfectly clear I resigned.

GYLLING. Perfectly clear. About what?

ROSMER. I can no longer accept this mysticism. I must reject the whole of the old doctrine.

GYLLING. An apostate then! A free-thinker! An apostate from the faith of your fathers!

ROSMER. I have reasons for supposing that the faith of my fathers did not go very deep.

GYLLING. So you are an apostate. What have you now to fill up your life?

ROSMER. I will continue untiringly to investigate and think. I will try, as far as possible, to get to the bottom of things. And then I will live. Be happy.

GYLLING. Do you know that this opens an abyss of thoughts in my mind?

ROSMER. I don't understand you.

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GYLLING. Now I will go to the root of the whole matter. Will you be frank? Will you answer my questions candidly?

ROSMER. Speak, my dear Gylling, ask what you will. I have nothing to conceal.

GYLLING. What was the ultimate reason why Beata put an end to her life?

ROSMER. I don't understand you. Can you have any uncertainty on the subject? And can one ever ask for reasons for what an unhappy, irresponsible invalid may do?

GYLLING. Are you certain that Beata was completely irresponsible for her actions? The doctors, at any rate, were by no means convinced of it.

ROSMER. If the doctors had ever seen her as I have so often seen her, they would have had no doubts.

GYLLING. I had no doubts either—then.

ROSMER. Unhappily there wasn't the smallest room for doubt. I have told you of her unfortunate frenzies of passion, which she expected me to return. Oh, how they terrified me! And then her sudden changes of mood; her dumb, consuming hatred——

GYLLING. Hatred? Of whom?

ROSMER. Of us, who were about her. Of me, first and foremost——

GYLLING. And I have to tell you that poor unhappy Beata died of her love for you.

ROSMER. What do you mean by that?

GYLLING. In her last year—when it seemed to her that she could not bear her life any longer, she had recourse to me, to pour forth all her anguish—first, because she declared that you were on the road to perversion——

ROSMER. But I don't think I was at that time. In any case I never confided to her my doubts and my inward conflicts.

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GYLLING. That proves all the more clearly what a wonderfully true intuition a deranged person may have.

ROSMER. But why did you hide this from me?

GYLLING. I did not want to torture and harass you still further by disclosing these accusations, which I myself did not believe in at the time.

ROSMER. But now——?

GYLLING. Ah, now my eyes are opened to the incredible—to your great crime——

ROSMER. Crime!

GYLLING. Yes, to the criminal life that has been and is being led in your house.

ROSMER. I don't understand a word of this.

GYLLING. Sometimes Beata came to me, weeping and lamenting. "Rosmer no longer loves me," she said. "He loves Rebecca; and she loves him."

ROSMER. She said that!

GYLLING. She said that. And that of course made me think her mad.

ROSMER. Yes, you must have thought so.

GYLLING. The last time she came to see me, she said: "Now no one must stand in the way of Johannes and his happiness. The White Horse must soon come now." I did not understand her.

ROSMER. Never did it occur to me that her diseased fancies had led her astray in that direction. My poor unhappy Beata.

GYLLING, Hypocrite!

ROSMER (*with a start*). What do you say!

GYLLING. Can I doubt any longer, after all these revelations, that a criminal life was being led here—even then?

ROSMER. Let me tell you that if any other man but you dared——

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GYLLING. If it had been any other man but you, it would not have cut me to the heart like this. But you, Johannes Rosmer—to have to tear you out of my mind with a single wrench.

ROSMER. Tell me now: you did not at the time believe a word of these accusations of Beata's?

GYLLING. How could I believe such things of a man like you—a man of honour, for you were once that.

ROSMER. But now——?

GYLLING. Have you not confessed that you have long been secretly an apostate from the faith of your fathers?

ROSMER. I have long been in doubt and conflict. Now I see clearly where I stand; that is the truth. But what then?

GYLLING. The rest I can surely leave you to say to yourself.

ROSMER. No, I tell you; no; I cannot. You are bound to speak out what you mean without reserve.

GYLLING. I mean that there cannot be any vast gulf, any impassable abyss between free thought and——

ROSMER. And what——?

GYLLING. —and free love.

ROSMER. And you dare say this to me! You are not ashamed of thinking and believing this!

GYLLING. I don't know what there is to hinder a man when he has once disavowed the moral commandments.

ROSMER. Have *I* done *that?*

GYLLING. To my mind faith and morality cannot be separated. And I know no other morality than our Christian one.

ROSMER. And I know no Christian morality: I know no other morality than that I have within me.

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GYLLING. Private, human morality is but a feeble protection.

ROSMER. Oh, this boundless fanaticism that has possessed you.

GYLLING. Yes, you may call me a fanatic in that respect. To my last hour I shall hate and fight against these fatal tendencies of the age. They have brought strife and disruption into my home—and into hundreds of others as well. They have embittered my life's work——

ROSMER. Political controversies, yes. But I do not mix myself up with those.

GYLLING. One thing cannot be separated from the other. And that apostacy should seize you too. Should separate us so irrevocably from each other. But I see it, I see it;—this case of yours—it is the work of a cunning and remorseless woman.

ROSMER. Not another word about her.

GYLLING. Was it not she who from the very first brought you into the path you are now following?

ROSMER. Yes; to her praise be it said. And since then we have faithfully worked together like two comrades.

GYLLING. You are like a child in her hands; and you don't see it.

ROSMER. I am happy and free; I can live my own life.

GYLLING (*putting on his coat*). Then see what that life will be like when you are cut off from all those who have hitherto been near to you.

ROSMER. They cannot all be such fanatics as you.

GYLLING. You will soon find out about that.

(*He gives a curt nod and goes out through the hall.*)

(MISS DANKERT *enters shortly afterwards from the right.*)

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MISS DANKERT. I saw him go out.

ROSMER. He will never come back.

MISS DANKERT. You have told him everything.

ROSMER. Yes.

MISS DANKERT. And then?

ROSMER. Complete rupture. Irremediable——

MISS DANKERT. Not irremediable, Rosmer. Just wait. You shall see.

ROSMER. Our old relations can never be restored.

MISS DANKERT. Well, believe me; that is best for you.

ROSMER. Yes, I know you think so. But such old habits are deeply rooted in me.

MISS DANKERT. Much too deeply. You would never have been free if that circle had been allowed to go on exercising its influence on you.

ROSMER. I am bound to tell you this. Now that I have openly withdrawn from them, they will cease to regard our relationship as what it is.

MISS DANKERT. Our relationship——!

ROSMER. Purity of life is not to be looked for in apostates, he said.

MISS DANKERT. Oh, these madmen!

ROSMER. What is to be done?

MISS DANKERT. Do you wish me to leave here?

ROSMER. Do I wish that!

MISS DANKERT. Well, it is not necessary on my account.

ROSMER. No, it's not, is it, Rebecca? Your spirit is so proud and free. Your own consciousness is sufficient to you.

MISS DANKERT. Yes, it is. Why should we flinch before the low and vile thoughts of some people? Why

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should we make ourselves unhappy? For we should be so——

ROSMER. Yes, yes.

MISS DANKERT. No, we shall keep together in good comradeship and help and support one another as well as we can. But look there——!

ROSMER (*with a cry*).

(RECTOR GYLLING *has opened the door at the back.*)

GYLLING. Well, I don't know whether I may come in again.

ROSMER. Pray come in.

(*The* RECTOR *comes in, keeping his overcoat on.*)

GYLLING. What is past cannot be altered; but now listen, Rosmer——

ROSMER. I'm listening, I'm listening——

GYLLING. Is there any necessity for your sad apostacy to be proclaimed over the whole country?

ROSMER. I must and will get out of the false position I have been in so long. My book is ready.

GYLLING. And you don't consider what consequences this will have for you? The whole conservative press will attack you and your book——

MISS DANKERT. But how can you tell that, Rector? You don't know the book, do you?

GYLLING. H'm, I suppose you will accuse us of fanaticism and persecution of those who differ from us. But this cannot be avoided in a period of agitation like ours. It is an absolute duty for every good citizen who has the power to do it, to root up all the dangerous weeds, whenever and wherever they may show themselves.

ROSMER. Well, well; then I know what to be prepared for.

GYLLING. No, you don't know. It will be something far more violent than you think. Therefore I

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beg you, Rosmer—hold your hand; do so—you, the quiet, retiring enquirer;—this is not suited to you.

ROSMER. But can you ask me to be so cowardly!

GYLLING. It is your duty to your environment. Remember the prominent position your family has occupied for so long. The respect you yourself enjoy. You will make many unstable people irresolute, vacillating, unhappy.

ROSMER. Do you think so?

GYLLING. You surely can't have a doubt of it yourself?

ROSMER. But I cannot stand looking on for ever. All around, in every department of life, a luxuriant germination is going on. And it is time that I too began to live. I must and will be happy in this world.

GYLLING. I can guess where this hunt for happiness is derived from. Don't you seek it too, Miss Dankert?

MISS DANKERT. It is in the air. It is one of the greatest things about the new age that we dare openly proclaim happiness as our end in life.

GYLLING. You do so?

MISS DANKERT. Certainly I do.

GYLLING. Is it principles of this kind that are preached in your new book?

ROSMER. Yes, if it is rightly understood.

GYLLING. Poor man—you, with your conscience burdened with guilt—you think you can find happiness by those paths.

MISS DANKERT. Burdened with guilt! What does that mean?

ROSMER. I feel that I am free and pure.

GYLLING. You believe that perhaps. But you are mistaken. You have betrayed yourself. And unhappy

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Beata gave you her life as a sacrifice. You are founding your happiness on water. Remember the mill-pond.

(*He goes.*)

ROSMER. But this is not true, Rebecca.

MISS DANKERT. I know that, of course.

ROSMER. But nevertheless—well, it must be said some time or other. Did I really love you even then?

MISS DANKERT. Love! You, Rosmer!

ROSMER. Will you go away now?

MISS DANKERT (*giving him her hand*). No, my friend, *now* I stay with you.

ROSMER. Thanks, Rebecca!

THIRD ACT

JOHANNES ROSMER'S *study. A door at the back; also on the left. Bookcases and shelves on the walls. A window on the right, and before it a writing-table, covered with books and papers.—Old-fashioned furniture; a table, with table-cloth, in the middle of the room.*

(JOHANNES ROSMER *is sitting in a high-backed chair at the writing-table, reading a pamphlet, the pages of which he cuts as he reads. There is a knock at the door on the left.*)

ROSMER (*without turning.*) Pray come in.

(MISS WEST *enters in a morning gown, with a newspaper in her hand.*)

MISS WEST. Good morning.

ROSMER (*reading*). Good morning, dear. Is there anything you want?

MISS WEST. Here is to-day's *County News.*

ROSMER (*turning*). Is there anything in it?

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MISS WEST. Yes, there is. (*Gives him the paper.*)

ROSMER. Already. (*Reads.*) Now let us see.

MISS WEST (*behind him, leaning over the back of the chair, also reads*). They wanted to be the first——

ROSMER. —to weaken the effect, yes.—"We cannot sufficiently express our contempt"—Contempt?—"for renegades who have lain in hiding while the situation remained uncertain"—Gylling never wrote that——

MISS WEST. Who knows?

ROSMER. No, no. "Renegades . . . but who march over with colours flying as soon as victory seems assured." And they can write such things, that they themselves don't believe. "When confused visionaries with no will of their own fall into the hands of calculating intriguers"—I won't read any more. (*Rises.*) At any rate not now.

MISS WEST. Will you answer it?

ROSMER. Oh, what is the use? And my name is not actually mentioned either.

MISS WEST. But it will soon get about that it is aimed at you. The calculating intriguer is of course myself.

ROSMER (*walking nervously about*). These days of denunciation—ah, it is indeed a great mission to make an end of them.

(MADAM HELSET *opens the door on the left.*)

MISS WEST. What is it, Madam Helset?

MADAM HELSET. It's that Mortensgård, who'd like to speak to Mr. Rosmer.

ROSMER. Mortensgård? What can he want?

MISS WEST. You'll let him come in, won't you?

ROSMER (*to* MADAM HELSET). Yes, let him come in.

(MADAM HELSET *opens the door to* MORTENSGÅRD, *closes it behind him and goes.*)

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MORTENSGÅRD. It is a long time since I stood before you, Pastor.

ROSMER. Yes, it is years ago. I have often asked myself whether I did not act too harshly at that time.

MORTENSGÅRD. Do you say that, Pastor?

ROSMER. Well, you have found another position, with which I am sure you feel more satisfied.

MORTENSGÅRD. Oh yes, in a way.

ROSMER. Have you anything in particular to say to me?

MORTENSGÅRD. First I think I ought to thank you for the card Mr. Hekfeldt brought me.

ROSMER. You may thank Miss West for that.

MORTENSGÅRD. Of course. Miss West also.

MISS WEST. Can you make use of him?

MORTENSGÅRD. Unhappily, I think it is too late.

ROSMER. Do you think so?

MORTENSGÅRD. He is not abreast of the times; stands so strangely outside what is going on. Looks upon things with eyes that may have been radical enough twenty years ago——

ROSMER. Yes, they were.—Tell me, have you read to-day's *County News*?

MORTENSGÅRD. No, not yet.

ROSMER. Don't say that, Mr. Mortensgård. I am sure you have read it.

MORTENSGÅRD. Well yes, I've glanced at it—here and there.

ROSMER. Then you must have seen the leading article?

MORTENSGÅRD. Yes, it struck me as rather strange.

ROSMER. Did you understand whom it was meant for?

MORTENSGÅRD. I don't think I could believe it myself.

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ROSMER. No, no.

MORTENSGÅRD. So there is something wrong between you and the other gentlemen?

ROSMER. I have left that circle. I am going to take up a position of my own.

MORTENSGÅRD. So you have left them, Pastor? Really? I didn't expect that.

MISS WEST. It is a step that has been long prepared, Mr. Mortensgård.

MORTENSGÅRD. Is it so? Must say, I didn't expect it. Are you going to reply to this attack, Pastor?

ROSMER. I hardly think so. I so cordially dislike these squabbles between man and man.

MORTENSGÅRD. But if it should be necessary—for perhaps there may be more to come——

ROSMER. Do you think so?

MORTENSGÅRD. It is their usual way. And if you should find it difficult to get anything into the *County News*, my paper is open to you. It would be a great honour to us.

ROSMER. Thanks. I may perhaps avail myself of your offer. Not in this connection. But there are other subjects that I wish to deal with.

MORTENSGÅRD. Whatever you like, Pastor. The more the better. It will be an incalculable gain to the cause of progress throughout the country, if a man like you, a Churchman, takes our side.

ROSMER. But look here; I must first tell you that I am no longer a Churchman.

MORTENSGÅRD. Of course, I know that; but your having resigned your living makes no difference.

ROSMER. I don't mean that either. But the fact is that I no longer hold the faith of the Church.

MORTENSGÅRD. You don't hold—? You!

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ROSMER. No. I have entirely broken with everything of that sort.

MORTENSGÅRD. I should advise you to keep that to yourself, Mr. Rosmer.

ROSMER. You give me that advice?

MISS WEST. You are at no pains to conceal your own opinions.

MORTENSGÅRD. It would be of little use. A man who has once been so incautious—so unfortunate, as I——

ROSMER. Then do you not put the truth before everything?

MORTENSGÅRD. I put my ends before everything. I have continued to be a teacher of the people; only in another way. What brought me to my fall was want and lack of knowledge. Now I wish to help as many as possible on the way to enlightenment and better circumstances. And this can only be done on the path of freedom.

ROSMER. Yes, there we are quite agreed.

MORTENSGÅRD. In this way I am redeeming my offence against society. For myself I have no hope of any gain. For I am civilly dead, as you know.

III

FROM THE FIRST ACT

MADAM HELSET. Yes, he said his name was Uldric.

ROSMER. Ulric?

MADAM HELSET. Yes, and then there was something more. I thought it sounded like Hetmand or something of the sort.

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ROSMER (*to* GYLLING). That unfortunate Ulric Hetman!

GYLLING. That black sheep Ulric Hetman? Then he is still alive.

ROSMER. Ask him to come in, Madam Helset.

MADAM HELSET. Oh, very well. (*She goes out.*)

GYLLING. Are you really going to let such a man into your house?

ROSMER. I knew him a little in the days of his prosperity.

GYLLING. When last *I* heard of him, he was in the House of Correction.

(MADAM HELSET *opens the door on the right for* ULRIC HETMAN, *and then withdraws, shutting the door behind him. He is a handsome man, with hair and beard streaked with grey. He is dressed like a common tramp; no overcoat; worn-out shoes; no shirt visible. He wears an old pair of black gloves, and carries a soft, greasy bowler hat under his arm and a walking-stick in his hand.*)

ULRIC HETMAN (*hesitates at first, then goes quickly up to the* RECTOR, *and holds out his hand*). How are you, Rosmer!

GYLLING. Excuse me——

HETMAN. Didn't expect to see me again in these parts, did you?

GYLLING. Excuse me— (*Pointing.*) There——

HETMAN (*turns*). Right. There he is. How are you, Rosmer? I could not pass by Rosmersholm without paying you a visit.

ROSMER. Travellers are always welcome with us.

HETMAN. I had no card on me. But I hope the elderly lady I met outside has duly announced me.

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Well, that's all right. (*Bows to Rebecca.*) Ah, Mrs. Rosmer, of course.

ROSMER. Miss West.

HETMAN. A near relation, no doubt. And there—(*Pointing to the* RECTOR.) A brother of the cloth, I see.

ROSMER. Rector Gylling.

HETMAN. Gylling. Gylling? Wait a bit; weren't you a student of philology?

GYLLING. Of course I was.

HETMAN. Why *Donnerwetter*, then I knew you!

GYLLING. Pardon me——

HETMAN. Weren't you——

GYLLING. Pardon me——

HETMAN. —one of those champions of morality that got me expelled from the Students' Club?

GYLLING. Very likely. But I disclaim any closer acquaintanceship.

HETMAN. Well, well; *nach Belieben, Herr Rector*. It's all one to me. Ulric Hetman remains the man he is for all that.

REBECCA. You are on your way into town, Mr. Hetman?

HETMAN. Yes, gracious lady, I am. I should be so unspeakably reluctant to lose anything of the respect of a young, pretty, amiable and charming lady. But unhappily—I am forced to confess it—as yet I do not know this part of the country.

GYLLING. Indeed. But you have roamed a good deal about other parts of the country, from what I have heard.

HETMAN (*gruffly*). That is so, Herr Professor. I have undertaken fairly extensive journeys. (*To* ROSMER.) But now you shall hear my plan. I have decided to give a series of lectures throughout the country. And I am

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thinking of making this my starting-point, although—I suppose my name is not very familiar in these parts?

ROSMER. No, I don't think so.

HETMAN. Oh no, it wasn't to be expected of the inhabitants of such a hole-and-corner place. (*To* GYLLING.) But tell me, Herr Inspector—*unter uns*—have you a tolerably decent, reputable, and commodious Public Hall in your honoured city?

GYLLING. The hall of the Workmen's Society is the largest.

HETMAN. And has the Herr Docent any official influence in this doubtless most beneficent Society?

GYLLING. I have nothing to do with it.

REBECCA (*to* HETMAN). You should apply to Peter Mortensgård.

HETMAN. *Pardon, madame*—what sort of an idiot is he?

ROSMER. What makes you take him for an idiot?

HETMAN. Can't one tell at once by the name that he is a plebeian?

GYLLING. I didn't expect that answer.

HETMAN. Perhaps the Herr Professor thought that Ulric Hetman was ready to demean himself with anyone you please? But one has to conquer one's antipathy when one stands at a turning-point in one's career. I will approach this individual, will open negotiations——

ROSMER. Are you really and seriously standing at a turning-point?

HETMAN. Seriously, Herr Pastor? Stand he where he may, Ulric Hetman always stands seriously. Now it is decided. One of these days I shall emerge from my somewhat unnoticed and unappreciated existence. The series of lectures that I am about to give—that is to unravel my life's greatest and newest idea.

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REBECCA. What idea is that, Mr. Hetman? Oh, tell us that.

HETMAN. Well, here, in a confidential circle of more or less close acquaintances, there is nothing to conceal. I will open my long-contemplated war against all the landowners in the country.

GYLLING. Against the landowners? Against the peasantry then?

HETMAN. Certainly, Herr Professor. Are you with me?

GYLLING. I am with you in so far as I am already at enmity with the Radical majority——

HETMAN. Bosh about majorities and such things! It's the peasants in general that I'm at war with. Both the great and the small. Both the Radicals and the idiots——

GYLLING. But allow me, Mr. ——; you can't do things without any party point of view whatever——

HETMAN. Now listen to me. And follow me carefully; then perhaps you will be able to understand. Suppose now I associate myself with three or four capitalists in town. We establish a large factory for the preparation of some product or other, which has not yet been discovered.

GYLLING. But where does this take us?

HETMAN. Patience, Herr Professor. In the preparation of this product we require all the oxygen that is contained in or brought to the atmosphere of the county —or we require all the carbon in the air. We—I and the other two or three capitalists might be using it to make diamonds of. But in both cases the air of the whole county would be unserviceable for men and other animals and for everything organic. Everyone of them would have to buy his portion of vital air from us—per-

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haps at an exorbitant price. If not—*heraus!* What do you say to that?

GYLLING. I don't think the authorities here would permit such an industry.

HETMAN. I don't think so either, honoured Sir. Nor do I think they would permit it if our little syndicate proposed to use the river or the fiord in such a way that no fish could swim there and no craft float. (*Coming nearer.*) Or perhaps you don't agree with me there?

GYLLING (*drawing back a step*). Well, well, well! Of course I agree.

HETMAN. I have a faint suspicion that you think I'm suffering from some form of mental disease or other. But that is an error for the moment. I have only been trying to emphasise the fact that we all agree that the air and water of our planet are common property to everybody. But when the solid earth is in question—the ground under our feet, that no one can do without, well, *das ist was Anderes!* Nobody breathes a word against the solid earth of the globe being in the hands of a comparatively small band of robbers, who have made use of it for centuries, who are making use of it to-day, and who propose to make use of it for all futurity. You see, honoured Sirs—and you, fair lady, that is the obscure matter of vital importance that I wish to throw light upon.

GYLLING. Doubt if it will be a profitable undertaking.

HETMAN. What do I care for profit? It is the idea—my greatest and my newest idea, that matters to me. It struck me in a flash that mankind's sense of justice is suffering from partial insanity. That is the heart of the matter. This idea has come to me from above—or from below—or from the obscure inscrutable powers. It has

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come to me through an inspiration, I say. Therefore it is mine alone. And now I am going into the town to present it to mankind.

REBECCA. But excuse me, Mr. Hetman—that idea is not altogether new.

HETMAN (*with a start*). What do you say—fair lady? My idea is not new!

REBECCA. I am afraid, not altogether. We were just reading a book this winter that deals with something similar.

HETMAN (*to* ROSMER). Does this lady speak the truth?

ROSMER. Yes, of course.

HETMAN. And in this book there is that about the land and——?

ROSMER. That is what the book turns upon.

HETMAN (*pale and tottering*). The meeting will—kindly—allow me to—to sit down.

(*He sinks into an easy chair and sits leaning forward, with his hands on his knees.*)

REBECCA. Can't I fetch you something? What can I——?

HETMAN (*gazing before him*). Too late. I came too late. This time again. Always too late.

GYLLING. That doesn't really make any difference. I'm sure it will be quite new to most of the people about here.

HETMAN (*with a look of misery*). How can it help me or cheer me if the whole world thought it was new, now that I know myself that it is not?

REBECCA. Oh, how I wish I had said nothing.

HETMAN (*rising*). Fair lady—it was a hard blow that your love of truth dealt me. I had treasured that idea, brooded over it with jealous affection, felt it grow, thought that I should never have the heart to let it go

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from me. And now, when I let it go, I am too late. This time again. Well, well, well! No tears of sympathy, ladies and gentlemen. I submit to no pity. Deserve none either. Perhaps there is a just Nemesis in this. Perhaps there has been something or other in my way of living——

ROSMER. Yes, don't you think so yourself?

HETMAN. I will put on a new man. And then I will get up one or two evening entertainments. A little declamation and singing and so on. (*To* GYLLING.) Is there such a thing as a Temperance Society in the town? A Total Abstinence Society? I need scarcely ask.

GYLLING. Yes. I am the president.

HETMAN. No, really? I shouldn't have thought it. Well, it is by no means impossible that I may come to you and enrol myself as a member for a week.

GYLLING. Excuse me, but we don't receive members by the week.

HETMAN. *À la bonne heure.* Ulric Hetman has never forced himself into that sort of Society. (*Turns.*) But I must not prolong my visit in this pleasant house. I must be on my way to the town and select a suitable lodging. I presume there is a decent hotel in the place.

REBECCA. Mayn't I offer you anything before you go?

HETMAN. Of what sort, gracious lady?

REBECCA. A cup of tea, or——

HETMAN. I thank my bountiful hostess many times—but I am always loath to trespass on private hospitality. (*Bows.*) Good-bye, gentlefolks all! (*Goes toward the door, but turns again.*) Oh, by the way—. Pastor Rosmer, for the sake of our ancient friendship, will you do your old friend a small service?

ROSMER. Yes, gladly. What is it?

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HETMAN. You see, I am travelling on foot at present. My wardrobe is being sent after me. Could you lend me a starched shirt—with cuffs—for a day or two?

ROSMER. Certainly. Is there nothing else?

HETMAN. Well, do you know—perhaps you could spare me an oldish, well-worn overcoat.

ROSMER. Oh yes; certainly I can.

HETMAN. And perhaps a pair of winter boots. I have been so imprudent as only to bring these light spring shoes with me.

ROSMER. That we can manage too. As soon as you let us know your address, we will send the things in.

HETMAN. Not on any account. So much trouble. I will take the bagatelles with me.

ROSMER. As you please. Come here with me then.

REBECCA. Let *me* go. Madam Helset and I will see to it. (*Goes out to the right.*)

ROSMER. Is there nothing else I can do for you?

HETMAN. Upon my word, I know of nothing more. Well, yes, damn it—now that I think of it—do you happen to have eight crowns in your pocket?

ROSMER. Let me see. (*Opens his purse.*) Here is a ten-crown note.

HETMAN. Well, well, never mind! I can take it. I can always get it changed in the town. Thanks in the meantime. Remember it was ten crowns you lent me. Farewell, respected Sirs.

(*Goes out to the right.* ROSMER *takes leave of him, and shuts the door behind him.*)

GYLLING. Merciful Heaven—so that is the once brilliant Ulric Hetman!

ROSMER. Step by step he must have gone down.

GYLLING. How much people thought of him! The lion of the capital,—in spite of all the excesses he was

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guilty of. But then came his notorious book. And that broke him.

ROSMER. Do you think he is past saving?

GYLLING. He?

ROSMER. Would it not be possible to raise him again?

GYLLING. Oh, my dear fellow, how could that be managed?

ROSMER. I mean by going to work in a forbearing—kindly way; showing confidence in him; relying on his good intentions. You could see that he showed a kind of self-knowledge.

GYLLING. Do you rely on the moods of such a man?

ROSMER. I would gladly do so.

GYLLING. Ah, Rosmer, you always had hope, when nobody else had.

MADAM HELSET. I suppose I can take away the supper things, Miss?

REBECCA. Yes, please.

MADAM HELSET (*clearing away*). It was very early for the Rector to go this evening.

REBECCA. I think we shall see him again to-morrow.

MADAM HELSET. That you won't. There's bad weather brewing.

REBECCA (*putting her sewing in its basket*). That's good. Then perhaps I too shall have a chance of seeing white horses at Rosmersholm.

FROM THE SECOND ACT

MORTENSGÅRD. That I don't doubt. But it is too late now. I am branded once for all—branded for life.

ROSMER. I did not think you still took that affair so much to heart.

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MORTENSGÅRD. Because I am now fairly well off, do you mean? Much better off than if I had kept my position at the school? Yes, that is true. I am. But then think of my peculiar situation. A new age has come over the country. I too might have risen to anything —like most of the others. But—all doors were closed to me. The men I have fought for, and who owe it to *me* that they have risen to power and honour—they will have nothing to do with me. They dare not for their own sake.

ROSMER. Do you think then that cowardice extends even to the most powerful?

MORTENSGÅRD. It is not cowardice, Pastor Rosmer. These people can't set aside hypocrisy. If they break with hypocrisy, their fall is at hand. Oh yes, you may perhaps come to feel the smart of it yourself now, Pastor.

MORTENSGÅRD. Madam Helset brought it to me late one evening.

ROSMER. If you had inquired of Madam Helset, you would have learnt that my poor unhappy wife was not fully accountable for her actions.

MORTENSGÅRD. I did make inquiries, Pastor Rosmer. But I must say that was not the impression I received.

ROSMER. Was it not? Then what did Madam Helset think?

MORTENSGÅRD. Well, she too was strange. I could not exactly get at what she thought.

ROSMER. Oh? But what is your precise reason for telling me now about this incomprehensible old letter?

MORTENSGÅRD. To impress on you the necessity for extreme prudence, Pastor Rosmer.

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ROSMER. In my life, do you mean?

MORTENSGÅRD. Yes.

ROSMER. Then you think that I must have something to conceal?

MORTENSGÅRD. Putting everything together, I don't see what other conclusion I can come to.

ROSMER. Then you believe me capable of leading an immoral life.

MORTENSGÅRD. It seems to me that such an expression sounds strange from you now, Pastor. I should have thought an emancipated man would have left behind him all these old morbid considerations and scruples.

ROSMER. Have you done so yourself?

MORTENSGÅRD. Yes, of course. I take it that, since I am in this world, I have the right to live my life after my own mind and inclination. But of course, for one's own sake one must avoid falling out with the hypocrites and with all the victims of stupefaction one mixes with.

ROSMER. You and I will never agree on that point, Mr. Mortensgård.

MORTENSGÅRD. H'm. But in any case be cautious, Pastor. If anything should come out that conflicts with current prejudices, you may be sure the whole liberal movement will get the blame for it. Good-bye, Pastor Rosmer.

FROM THE THIRD ACT

REBECCA. When I came down here from Finmark with Dr. West—I was then a year or two over twenty——

ROSMER. Oh yes. I know that.

REBECCA. Rosmer—I was no longer what people call an—an innocent woman.

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ROSMER. What do you say! Impossible! You are out of your senses.

GYLLING. Perhaps I had better go.

REBECCA. No, please stay where you are, my dear Rector. Yes, Rosmer—that is the truth about me from the beginning.

ROSMER. Oh, you, you! How could you—! Who was he?

REBECCA. One who had complete power over me. He had taught me everything. All the desultory information I had about life at that time.

ROSMER. But for all that! You—oh, that you could surrender yourself——!

REBECCA. I thought then that it was something that concerned no one but myself. If it were only hidden.—And hidden it was.

GYLLING. So that is the state of the case.

REBECCA (*looking at him*). After such an experience it is not to be wondered at that a woman should hold out. Hold out in spite of pretty harsh usage. Hold out to the last.

GYLLING. Now I understand it—perhaps.

ROSMER. And that is what you were when you came to Rosmersholm. What did you want here!

REBECCA. I wanted to take my share in the life of the new era that was dawning, with its new ideas. You had told me about Ulric Hetman and the revolution he had nearly—. I wanted you to be to me what he had once been to you. And then, I thought, we should march onward in freedom, side by side. Ever onward. Ever farther to the front.—But between you and perfect emancipation there rose the great, insurmountable barrier.

ROSMER. What barrier do you mean?

REBECCA. I mean this: you could grow only in the

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sunshine—and here you were sickening in the gloom of such a marriage.

ROSMER. But we never said a word about my marriage. Never a word. I am certain of that.

REBECCA. We did not. Nor was it necessary. For I could see to the bottom of your heart. And then I went to work.

ROSMER. Went to work? In what way?

GYLLING. Do you mean that——

REBECCA. Yes, Rosmer— (*Rises.*) Sit still. You too, Rector Gylling. But now it must out. It was not you, Rosmer. You are innocent. It was *I*—that lured Beata out into the paths of delusion——

ROSMER (*springs up*). Rebecca!

GYLLING (*rises from the sofa*). The paths of delusion!

REBECCA. The paths that led to the mill-pond. Now you know it, both of you.

ROSMER. But I don't understand—. I only hear—and don't understand a word.

GYLLING. Oh yes. I am beginning to understand.

ROSMER. But what can you possibly have said? There was nothing—absolutely nothing to tell.

REBECCA. There was this: we were talking together, reading together, working our way to emancipation together.

ROSMER. So she knew that.

REBECCA. She came to know that *you* were working yourself free from all the old, obsolete prejudices.

ROSMER. And then? What more? I must know all now.

REBECCA. Sometime after, I begged and implored her to let me go away from Rosmersholm.

ROSMER. Why did you want to go?

REBECCA. I did not want to go; I wanted to stay where I was. But I told her that it would be best for

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us all that I should go away in time. I gave her to understand that if I stayed any longer, I could not—I could not tell—what might happen.

ROSMER. Then this is what you did.

REBECCA. Yes, Rosmer.

ROSMER. *This* is what you call "going to work."

REBECCA. I called it so, yes.

ROSMER. Have you confessed all now?

REBECCA. Yes.

GYLLING. Not all.

REBECCA. What more should there be?

GYLLING. Did you not at last give Beata to understand that it was necessary—not only that it would be wisest, but that it was necessary—both for your own sake and Rosmer's, that you should go away as soon as possible?

REBECCA. Perhaps I did say something of the sort.

ROSMER (*sinks into a chair and covers his face with his hands*). And this tissue of lies and deceit she believed in! Believed in it as firmly, as immovably, as in a gospel. (*Looks up at Rebecca.*) And she never turned to me. Never said one word to me. Why did she not do so?

REBECCA. I dissuaded her so earnestly from it.

ROSMER. Yes, yes, in everything she bowed before your will. And then she quietly went out of life. Effaced herself. Went into—the mill-pond. (*Springs up.*) How could you—how could you play this ghastly game?

REBECCA. I had to choose between your life and hers, Rosmer. Either you would have been ruined or——

ROSMER. —or Beata, yes.

GYLLING. This is frightful! Frightful.

REBECCA. You think then that I acted in full, cool self-possession! Just as I stand here telling it all! There are two sorts of will in us, I believe. I wanted Beata

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away. But I never really believed that it would come to pass. As I advanced, at each step I seemed to hear something within me cry out: No farther! Not a step farther!—And yet I could not stop. I had to venture the least little bit farther. Only one hair's breadth more. And then one more—and always one more. Have you never felt what it is like to be giddy? One dare not take another step. Nor look down. And yet one does it. One can't help it. One almost thinks it's a delightful sensation—. That is the way such things come about.

ROSMER. Now I know how it all happened. But there is one thing I do not understand. How were you able to bring yourself to disclose your whole heartless conduct?

REBECCA. It had to be done for your sake. I did not wish you to feel oppressed and burdened by self-reproach.

FROM THE FOURTH ACT

MADAM HELSET. But the Pastor, he's not home yet?

REBECCA. If I don't see him, you can tell him that I will write to him—a long letter. Tell him that.

MADAM HELSET. But dear Miss West—that'll never do at all——

REBECCA. What, Madam Helset?

MADAM HELSET. That you should go away from Rosmersholm without saying good-bye to the Pastor.

REBECCA. Well, as it happens, perhaps it is best so.

REBECCA. Could you have believed such a thing of Pastor Rosmer and me?

MADAM HELSET. Believed——?

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REBECCA. Yes, don't you think it came like a thunderclap?

MADAM HELSET. Oh, I won't quite say that either. We're all of us human, Miss West.

REBECCA. That's very true, Madam Helset. We are all of us human.

MADAM HELSET (*looking towards the hall*). Oh Lord—if that's not him coming!

REBECCA. After all. (*Resolutely.*) Well, well; so be it.

REBECCA (*pointing out through the hall*). Hush. Do you see who is coming?

ROSMER (*looks out*). It is Ulric Hetman.

(ULRIC HETMAN *comes in through the hall.*)

ULRIC HETMAN (*stops in the doorway*). Rosmer—my boy, my boy—what is this I hear about you?

ROSMER. Have you come to stay with us?

HETMAN. No. I have come to say my last farewell.

REBECCA. Are you leaving the town again already?

HETMAN. Yes. I'm shaking the dust off my feet. A man can't live up in these parts. It's even worse than down below.

ROSMER. I had thought that more light and freedom was coming.

HETMAN. So I hear.

ROSMER (*with a melancholy smile*). Your old pupil has not been false to you, you see.

HETMAN. Beware of what you do. Don't follow my example. All my doctrine is false. Has been false from its very beginning. That I have now found out.

ROSMER. Do you no longer adhere to all the great ideals?

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HETMAN. It's all rubbish, my boy. Empty dreams. Nothing but mocking shadows that drag us down to destruction. Humanity is past help.

ROSMER. Do you believe that!

HETMAN. Past help for all eternity.

ROSMER. But why? Why should we believe that?

HETMAN. Because a mistake was made at the very Creation.

ROSMER. And that mistake was——?

HETMAN (*shrugs his shoulders*). Who can say!

ROSMER. Well, but how can you tell that the mistake was there?

HETMAN (*with a mysterious smile*). The Master deceived himself, my boy.

ROSMER. Deceived himself? The Master? How?

HETMAN. Are you a judge of character?

ROSMER. I think myself I am, but——

HETMAN. Well, in any case you used once to mix with artists—with various poets, I remember.

ROSMER. Yes.

HETMAN. Didn't you notice a peculiar trait about those fellows?

ROSMER. What trait do you mean?

HETMAN. When one of these creative gentlemen had finished a work, which had turned out absolutely as it should be, he examined it and let it go. Quite calmly. There was nothing to be said about the work. It was as it should be. Didn't you notice that, my boy?

ROSMER. Yes. And it seems to me perfectly reasonable.

HETMAN. I think so too. But once in a while the master might chance upon a failure. Either he was not in the right mood, or in too much of a hurry, or whatever it might be. What does my gentleman do then? Why, he puts

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his head on one side. Looks at his work with the air of a connoisseur. Examines it from every side. And then says he: Upon my soul—this is good. Damned good.

ROSMER. Insecurity, you mean?

HETMAN (*nods slowly*). The master feels that there is a flaw in the work. And so he takes a firm stand. Insecurity of conscience, my boy. And that is what we have all inherited. That is why humanity is incurable. Past help.

REBECCA. Then is life worth living?

HETMAN. Oh yes. Only avoid doing silly things. No quackery. Let life swing right or left—just as it chances.

REBECCA. But one's self? Each individual?

HETMAN. Eat, drink and be merry, my fair young lady. And you must take existence in the same way, Rosmer. The Master forgot to give us wings. Both inner and outer ones. So let us crawl on the earth as long as we can. There is nothing else to be done.

ROSMER. Well, in any case there is the alternative of making an end of it all.

REBECCA (*involuntarily*). Yes, happily.

HETMAN. But surely you two can get along——

ROSMER. Do you think so? Then you still believe in love?

HETMAN. My son, I believe in happiness—the happiness of living under the same roof with so attractive a companion.

ROSMER. Unhappily the attractive companion is leaving me.

HETMAN. Leaving you?

ROSMER. To-night.

REBECCA. In half an hour.

HETMAN. You don't seem to understand how to keep your women. Your first one left you too.

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ROSMER. Yes, she did.

HETMAN. Brave woman. She went of her own accord —to smooth your path.

ROSMER. Who told you that?

HETMAN. That blackguard Mortensgård let out something about it in a letter.

ROSMER. I see.

HETMAN. Respect and honour her. For that woman must have had a kind of wings, it seems to me.

REBECCA. Wings? Why wings?

HETMAN. Did she not raise herself so high that she could die for her love?

ROSMER. Ah yes—to be able to die for something.

HETMAN. I would have taken my oath there wasn't a single living soul that could do it.

ROSMER. To seek death—and so bear witness of one's love.

REBECCA. I shall not go to-night.

ROSMER (*uneasily*). Yes, go! Go!

HETMAN. Stay, fair lady. To you there is no danger abroad. He will not let *you* be lured beneath the waters. Farewell.

ROSMER. Are you going now? In the dark night?

HETMAN. The dark night is best. Peace be with you.

(*He goes out through the hall. There is a short silence in the room.* REBECCA *is standing by the window.* ROSMER *walks up and down. Then he sits down in a chair by the table.*)

MADAM HELSET. Miss West, the carriage is— (*Looks round.*) Not here? Out at this time of night? Well— I must say—. H'm— (*Goes out into the hall, looks round, and comes in again.*) Not on the garden seat. Ah, well,

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well. (*Goes to the window and looks out.*) Good God!—what's that? The White Horse! Oh no, oh no!—There it is. On the bridge. To-night he dares— (*Shrieks aloud.*) In the mill-race! Both of them in the mill-race! (*Runs to the door on the right and cries:*) Help—help! (*Stops, glances towards the window, and says in a lower tone.*) Oh no. This is past all help or remedy. It was the dead wife that took them.

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"THE LADY FROM THE SEA"

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

BY

HENRIK IBSEN

1888

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DRAFT

1st act.—The little calling-place for tourist steamers. They only call when there are passengers to be landed or taken on board. Shut in by high, steep mountains. The free, open sea is not visible. Only the winding fiord. Bathing hotel. Sanatorium higher up. When the play opens the last steamer of the year is going north. The boats always pass at midnight. Slowly, noiselessly they glide into the bay and out again.

The persons of the play fall into three groups. First, there are peculiar figures among the inhabitants of the place. The lawyer, married for the second time to the woman from the free, open sea. Has two young grown-up daughters of his first marriage. Refined, well-bred, bitter. Past stained by a rash affair. Therefore future career barred. The starving sign-painter with his artist's dreams, made happy by imagination. The old married clerk. In his youth he wrote a play, which was performed once. Is constantly polishing it, and lives in the illusion of getting it published and making a success. Takes, however, no step in this direction. Reckons himself nevertheless among literary men. Wife and children believe blindly in "the piece." (Perhaps he is a private teacher, not a clerk?)—Fresvik the tailor, the radical man-midwife, who shows his "emancipation" in ridiculous escapades—intrigues with other men's wives; talks about divorce and the like.

The second group is formed by the summer visitors and the invalids at the Sanatorium. Among these is the

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young invalid sculptor, who has to recruit his strength to get through the coming winter. For next summer he is promised a grant of money and a commission and other support, and then he will be able to go to Italy. Dreads the possibility of having to die without having seen the south and without having achieved anything good in his art.—His "patron" is staying at the bathing hotel. Assumes guardianship over the invalid. Is a man of principle. No aid, no support this year. The grant to be down in black and white, "then we will see what we can do next year." His wife, stupid, arrogant and tactless. Hurts the invalid, sometimes by design, sometimes unwittingly.—Many secondary persons.

The third group consists of passing tourists, who enter episodically into the action.

Life is apparently bright, easy and lively up there beneath the shadow of the mountains and in the monotony of seclusion. Then the idea is thrown out that this kind of life is a life of shadows. No energy; no struggle for liberation. Only longings and desires. Thus they live through the short, light summer. And afterwards—into the darkness. Then awakes the longing for the life of the great world outside. But what is to be gained by that? With surroundings, with spiritual development, demands and longings and desires increase. He or she, who stands on the height, yearns for the secrets of the future and a share in the life of the future and communication with distant worlds. Everywhere there is limitation. The result is melancholy like a hushed, wailing song over the whole of human existence and over the deeds of men. A light summer day with the great darkness to follow—that is all.——

Has the line of human development gone astray? Why have we come to belong to the dry land? Why not to the

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air? Why not to the sea? The longing to possess wings. The strange dreams that one can fly and that one does fly without being surprised at it—how is all this to be interpreted?——

We ought to possess ourselves of the sea. Build our cities floating upon the sea. Move them southward or northward according to the season. Learn to harness the storms and the weather. Some such felicity will come. And *we*—shall not be in it! Shall not live to see it!——

The sea's power of attraction. Longing for the sea. Human beings akin to the sea. Bound by the sea. Dependent on the sea. Compelled to return to it. A fish species forms a primitive link in the chain of evolution. Are rudiments thereof still present in the human mind? In the minds of certain individuals?

Pictures of the teeming life of the sea and of that which is "lost for ever."

The sea possesses a power over one's moods that has the effect of a will. The sea can hypnotise. Nature in general can do so. The great mystery is the dependence of the human will on that which is "will-less."

She came from out by the sea, where her father's parsonage lay. Grew up out there—by the free, open sea. Became engaged to the wayward young mate—a dismissed naval cadet—whose ship was laid up for repairs for the winter in an outlying harbour. Had to break off the engagement by her father's wish. Partly also of her own accord. Could not forgive what came to light about his past. So prejudiced was she at that time through her education in her father's home. Nor has she ever since quite left her prejudices behind, though she knows better. Stands on the border-line, hesitating and doubting.——

The mystery in her marriage—which she scarcely dares

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acknowledge to herself; scarcely dares to think of: Imagination's power of attraction towards the former one. Towards him who is gone.

In effect—in her unconscious view—it is *he* that she is living her married life with.

But—on the other hand—are her husband and stepchildren living wholly with her? Have not these three, as it were, a whole world of memories among themselves? They keep festivals, whose meaning she can only guess. Conversations come to a standstill—are broken off, when she comes in. She did not know her predecessor, and from delicacy the subject is not mentioned when *she* is present. There is a freemasonry between all the others in the house. The housekeeper and servants included. She is never admitted to it. The others have their own affairs. She stands outside.

She meets "the strange passenger." This is the name given him by the other visitors. He once felt a deep attachment to her. That was when she was engaged to the young sailor. Now he is overworked and has been ordered sea-bathing. Life has not brought him what he looked for. He is bitter. Cutting in a jocular way.

The sculptor tells his story. Was sent to sea at twelve. Shipwrecked five years ago. Was then seventeen. On that occasion he got his "lesion." Lay for a long time in the cold sea. Inflammation of the lungs followed. Has never really got over it. But it was a great piece of luck nevertheless. For it enabled him to become an artist. Think of being able to model in the delightful clay, which shapes itself so delicately between one's fingers!

What then does he think of modelling? Figures of gods? Or perhaps old vikings?

No. Nothing of that sort. As soon as he can manage it, he will have a try at a big group.

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And what is it to represent?

Oh, it is to represent something out of his own experience.

And what was that? He really must tell it.

Well, it is to be a young woman, a sailor's wife, lying asleep. And she is dreaming too. One will be able to see that.

Nothing more?

Oh yes. Her husband is drowned. But he has come home nevertheless. In the night-time; and there he stands by her bedside and looks at her.

But in heaven's name—he said it was to be something out of his own experience!

Yes. This is out of his own experience. In a sense.

He has seen——?!

Well—he doesn't mean to say he has actually seen it, of course. But all the same——

And then comes the tale—fragmentary and abrupt—suggesting to her terrible misgivings and apprehensions.

First Act

The lawyer's house, with a large, shady veranda on the left. Garden in front and around. At the back, a hedge, with a small gate. Beyond the hedge, a footpath along the shore, shaded by trees on either side. Between the trees there is a view of the fiord, with high mountain peaks in the distance. Brilliantly clear and warm summer morning.

The *Painter* stands with a large palette, painting some new posts on the veranda. The *Private Teacher* enters from the lawyer's office at the back of the house. Has got another execution delayed. Thoroughly good-hearted man, that lawyer. Now if only the play is brought out, we

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are over the worst. *Teacher*. Is there company expected to-day? *Painter*. Looks like it. The daughters are putting flowers in vases on the veranda. *T*. Yes, it is a gay time in the tourist season. *P*. To-night another of the big boats is coming. A few words are exchanged with the girls, who go backwards and forwards.—The Sculptor comes along the path, stops at the gate and enters into conversation with those within. The painter embarrassed at being seen at such common work. Good-nature of course. Bitterness against "fashionable artists," whose own country is not good enough for them. The *Sculptor* comes inside. Wants to borrow the palette. The girls with more flowers. *S*. Is it some anniversary? The younger: Yes, mother's birthday. *S*. Indeed! The elder (to her sister): Do be quiet! *S*. says good-bye and goes. *T*. goes also. The lawyer comes out on to the veranda. Some words are exchanged with *P*., who has now finished his work and goes.—Lawyer and daughters. He is not quite satisfied with the arrangements. The elder: Oh father, "the s. p." ("strange passenger") is coming this morning, you know. Lawyer smiles: Yes, yes, you're right. Observations about him. Is still good-looking. An old lion of the capital. The s. p. comes. Had so little opportunity of talking to him last night. After a while the girls go. Then a long conversation between the friends. Details about the intervening years.—The wife returns from bathing. Lawyer says she disports herself in the water like a mermaid. Yes, yes, she says, the sea is pleasanter than the dry land. Lawyer has to go and attend to his business.—Frank and confidential dialogue between the two others. She has not been really happy for the last three years. Why? Cannot tell him. It is so strange.—The sculptor comes with a large bouquet. Bows and offers his congratulations.—Why? On the occasion of the anniversary.—Is

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there any anniversary to-day?—Yes, it is your birthday, isn't it? Mine!—The s. p. No, I'm sure it isn't. *Lady.* What makes you think that? *S.* Miss B. let out the secret. She said, it is mother's birthday to-day. *L.* I see! The s. p. But— Oh, just so. *L.* takes the flowers and thanks him. Then she enters into conversation with *S.* on his affairs.—Here follows the dialogue already sketched (in the 2nd sheet). *S.* is sent down into the garden to the girls. The s. p. finds him too green. Lawyer enters from his office. The girls from the garden room. Outburst over the beautiful flowers. Oh look! Where did they come from? Mr. P. brought them.—The s. p. For a birthday greeting. The younger: Oh—. The elder: There, you see! Lawyer (embarrassed): My dear, etc. Don't be hurt about it—. The girls, you see—etc. Soda-water and fruit-syrup in the garden room. It is cooler. I'll go and open the bottles. (He and the daughters go in.) The s. p. You are being wronged. You have no share in the life that is led here. *L.* I must not complain. For I too live my own life—in a way.—You? How?—That I cannot tell to anybody on earth.—Won't you go in? (They go into the garden room.)

Second Act

(Up at "the Prospect," a wooded height behind the trading station. Far below the outer fiord is seen, with islands and jutting promontories. The open sea is not visible. Up on the height, a flag-staff and one or two seats. A summer night. There is a tinge of orange in the upper air and over the mountain peaks in the far distance.)

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CHARACTERS

LAWYER [DOCTOR] WANGEL [, district physician].
MRS. WANGEL, his second wife.
THEA [ANNETTE] } his daughters by his former mar-
FRIDA, a young girl } riage.
HESLER, a Civil servant [, a schoolmaster].
HANS LÖVSTAD [LYNGSTRAND], a young sculptor.
STRÖMME, a merchant.
MRS. STRÖMME, his wife.
SOLFELDT [BALLESEN], a painter.
BALLESEN, a private tutor.
TOWNSPEOPLE, VISITORS, STEAMBOAT PASSENGERS, AND TOURISTS.

(The action takes place at a trading station in Northern Norway.)

END OF 1. ACT

Those lovely flowers——?

A birthday greeting (*puts them in the vase*). There, now they are a decoration for mother's birthday.

(*The girls fall on her neck.*)

1ST ACT

A feeling of summer, life and gladness everywhere. The days pass like a holiday. Thora takes her husband into her confidence after the conversation with Hesler. Wangel disturbed at hearing of her former secret engagement. Forgiveness and forgetting. Now at any rate she belongs to him alone. Hereafter there will be per-

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fect confidence between him and her and the children. They will mutually share each other's memories. Henceforth they will live together as husband and wife. She (agitated). As husband and wife! Yes, yes! He starts. Does not understand. She gives no further explanation.

2nd Act

Wangel tries to find the explanation of her strange nature by means of hints and indirect enquiries in a conversation with Hesler. It is the sea that attracts her with mysterious power. Wangel speaks to her about this. Does she wish to go to the sea? Yes, yes, she wishes to go to the sea! Then he is willing to move out there! No, no, no sacrifices like that! No wrenching away from here, where is his natural home. He holds to his purpose. She: Set me free! let me go alone! For how long? For ever! I cannot live with you any longer. Then follows the explanation. It is really with him she is living in marriage!

3rd Act

This act takes place in the secluded part of the garden, with bridge and bathing-house. Thora is staying there. Wangel comes to her. Then Hesler. Then at last Lyngstrand. Great news! The American is here! He has seen him!—Scene between Thora and Johnson. What the sea has joined, man cannot put asunder. Wangel comes. Recognises the American as the mate who killed the captain. Calls Thora to witness. She: No, no. Denies all. Johnson goes: Well, now you must get ready to go, Thora.

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4TH ACT

Same place. Now comes the settlement between Wangel and Thora. Hesler appears. Wangel consents to Thora's going. Renounces his claim upon her.

How did you see him?
Just as he was in reality.

She will leave him.
Divorce.
He has bought her.

But yesterday you said that you saw him as he was when you parted.

She has sold herself.
Feeling of shame over it.
This is not pure marriage.

Did I say that—You are mistaken.

No. You said yesterday that at the first moment you did not recognise him.

The first one was so.

His eyes.

It was founded in freedom.

In free will on both sides.

This stands in the way.

Oh, if she could come to love him as he deserves.

The dæmonic attraction of the entirely unknown.
But she does not know him!
For that very reason.
She did not know W. either.

Arenholdt.

And then to-night the decision!
For a whole lifetime.
Perhaps the true future forfeited!

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Life in freedom forfeited.
Tora, you love him!
I feel as though my place
were with him.
You shall see him. Speak
to him.

Conclusion:
Tora: Now I come to you
of my own will.

5TH ACT

Arenholdt, Annette, Lyngstrand and Frida in a boat from left to right.

Jump ashore here. No, make fast there at the bathing-steps.

A little while after, Arenholdt and Annette come in from R.

Annette: I began to be so afraid that life would go from me.

Now he is dead to her——

FIRST ACT

The house of Wangel, the lawyer, with a large, shady veranda, on the left. Garden in front and around. [Near the veranda, a flag-staff. To the right, in the garden, an arbour, with table and chairs.] At the back, a hedge, with a small gate. Beyond the hedge, a footpath along the shore, shaded by trees on either side. Between the trees there is a view of the fiord, with high mountain peaks in the distance. It is a warm and brilliantly clear summer morning.

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(BALLESEN, *a middle-aged painter, dressed in an old velvet jacket and broad-brimmed hat, with the look of an artist in his costume, stands with brush and paint-pot below the veranda, painting some new wooden posts in the railing. A little way off stands an easel with a stretched canvas. Beside it, on a camp-stool, are brushes, palette, and a paint-box. He is humming as he works.*)

(THEA WANGEL *comes out upon the veranda through the open garden-room door. She is carrying a large vase of flowers, which she places upon the table.*)

THEA WANGEL (*looking at the freshly-painted posts*). Well, Ballesen—I hope you put plenty of drying-oil into the colour?

BALLESEN. Within an hour it will be as dry as a bone, Miss Wangel. I give you my word as an artist.

(THEA WANGEL *goes into the garden-room again.*)

(*Shortly afterwards,* HANS LYNGSTAD *comes along the path from the right.* [*He is a slightly-built young man, of delicate appearance, poorly but neatly dressed.*] *He stops, interested by the sight of the easel and painter's materials.*)

HANS LYNGSTAD (*outside the hedge*). Good morning.

BALLESEN (*turning quickly*). Ah—! (*Puts down the paint-pot in embarrassment, and begins to busy himself at the easel.*) Good morning. I take my hat off to you, sir—though I don't think I have the pleasure——

LYNGSTAD. You are a painter, are you not?

BALLESEN. Yes, certainly. Why should I not be a painter?

LYNGSTAD. Ah, I can see you are.—Should you mind my coming in for a moment?

BALLESEN. Do you want to have a look at it?

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LYNGSTAD. Yes, I should like to extremely.

BALLESEN. Oh there's nothing much to see as yet. But pray come in—you're quite welcome.

LYNGSTAD. Many thanks. (*He comes in through the garden gate.*)

BALLESEN (*painting*). I'm only sketching it in at present,—just the main outlines, you know.

LYNGSTAD. Yes, I see.

BALLESEN. An artist yourself, perhaps?

LYNGSTAD. A painter, you mean?

BALLESEN. Yes.

LYNGSTAD. No, I am not. But I am going to be a sculptor.

BALLESEN. Oh indeed—are you? Well, well, sculpture, too, is a fine, gentleman-like art. (*Goes back a step and looks at his picture through the hollow of his hand, with his head on one side.*) I fancy I've seen you in the street once or twice. Have you been staying here long?

LYNGSTAD. No, I have only been here a fortnight. But I hope I may be able to stay the whole summer.

BALLESEN. To enjoy the gaieties of the season, eh?

LYNGSTAD. Well, rather to get up my strength a bit.

BALLESEN. Not an invalid, I hope?

LYNGSTAD. Well, I'm what you might call a little bit weak. Nothing to speak of, you know. It's only a sort of short-windedness in my chest.

BALLESEN. Pooh—a mere trifle. (*Puts down his palette.*) But, by Jove, I was forgetting that I've promised Miss Wangel to do a bit of decorating here. (*Takes the paint-pot and finishes the woodwork.*) Perhaps you think it strange to see me doing this kind of thing. But I don't see anything to be ashamed of in art lending its aid to handicraft occasionally. Eh? Is there really anything to be said against it?

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LYNGSTAD. No, I'm sure there can't be.

(*A steamer's whistle is heard again outside.*)

BALLESEN. Hullo! There's another monster howling. Now I suppose we shall be saddled with a new lot of disturbers of the peace.

LÖVSTAD. There seems to be a continual coming and going of tourists here. All these steamboats calling every single day.

BALLESEN. You might add, at night as well. To-night the big boat for the North Cape will be here. And then we shall get them—all those who stop here to make excursions into the fiords. Ugh!

LÖVSTAD. Don't you care for all the life there is here in the summer?

BALLESEN. No, indeed I don't. For it's quite foreign to the character of the town.

LÖVSTAD. Are you a native of the place?

BALLESEN. No, I am not. But I have become attached to the place by the bonds of time and habit.

LÖVSTAD. You have lived here a long time, then?

BALLESEN. Well, seventeen or eighteen years. I came here with Varde's dramatic company. But we got into financial difficulties; so the company broke up and was scattered to the winds.

LÖVSTAD. But you remained here?

BALLESEN. Yes, I did. For the town needed me, I must tell you. You see, at that time I was working mostly in the decorating line.——

(THEA *comes out with a rocking-chair, which she places in the veranda.*)

THEA (*speaking into the garden-room.*) Frida—see if you can find the embroidered footstool for father.

LÖVSTAD (*approaches the veranda and bows*). Good morning, Miss Wangel.

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THEA (*by the balustrade*). Ah, is that you, Mr. Lövstad? Good morning. Excuse me one moment——
(*Goes into the house.*)

BALLESEN. Do you know the family here?

LÖVSTAD. Very slightly. I have met the young ladies once or twice at other houses. And I had a little talk with Mrs. Wangel the last time the band played up at the Prospect. She said I might come and see them.

BALLESEN. I'll tell you what—you ought to cultivate their acquaintance.

LÖVSTAD. Yes, I've been thinking of paying them a visit—calling on them, you know. If I could only find some pretext for it.

B. Oh nonsense—a pretext——

(FRIDA *comes out with the stool.* THEA *brings more flowers.* LÖVSTAD *bows to* FRIDA *from the garden.* BALLESEN *collects his things and goes.*)

FRIDA (*by the balustrade*). Thea said you were in the garden.

(WANGEL *comes in from the left, behind the house.*)

WANGEL. Well, here I am, little girls!

THEA. Oh, I'm so glad you have come.
(*He goes up into the veranda.*)

FRIDA. Have you finished at the office now, father?

WANGEL. Oh no, I must go down there again presently. I only wanted to see if Hesler had come. He hasn't, then?

THEA. No, we have seen nothing of him yet.

THEA (*nodding confidentially to him*). Of course you understand that it's all in honour of Mr. Hesler. When an old friend comes to pay his first visit to you——

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FRIDA. We had the flag up for him yesterday too. When he came by the boat.

WANGEL (*half smiling*). You are a pair of young rogues—Well, well,—after all it's only natural that we should remember—. But all the same—I don't like all this,—the manner of it. Well—what can one say? I suppose there is no other way of doing it.

FRIDA. Look, there he is, father.

(HESLER *appears on the path, coming from the left, and goes in through the garden gate.*)

WANGEL (*going to meet him*). Welcome! A hearty welcome to you!

(*They shake hands and go into the veranda together.* HESLER *bows to the daughters.*)

WANGEL (*forces him into the rocking-chair*). Sit down. Sit down, old friend!

HESLER. Thanks. (*Looking about him.*) So here I am in my old haunts again. It is many years since I last sat here.

WANGEL. Yes, it's eight whole years ago. But I suppose you recognize——?

HESLER. Perfectly. I don't think there are many changes here. Except that the trees have grown a bit, and you have planted a new arbour there——

WANGEL. Oh no, outwardly, I dare say——

HESLER. And now, of course, you have two grown-up daughters in the house.

WANGEL. Oh, only one grown-up, surely.

FRIDA (*half aloud*). Just listen to father!

WANGEL. But now you shall just sit quiet and have a good rest. You are looking rather tired after your journey.

THEA. Shall we bring a little soda-water and syrup into the garden-room? It will soon be too warm out here.

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WANGEL. Yes, do, little girls. Soda-water and syrup. And perhaps a little cognac.

THEA. Cognac too?

WANGEL. Just a little. In case any one should care for it.

THEA. Very well.

(*She and* FRIDA *go into the garden-room and close the door behind them.*)

WANGEL (*seats himself*). Are you thinking of taking a regular course of baths here?

HESLER. Not at all. I have no need of that. I am just going to be idle for a month. And not think about anything at all.

WANGEL. And not overwork yourself again when you get back.

HESLER. Well, what the deuce is one to do? When there isn't a blessed thing on earth that's worth devoting one's self to and living for, it makes one glad that there is such a thing as work. And so one works until one drops.

WANGEL. I don't think I could ever bring myself to do that.

HESLER. You don't care for it?

WANGEL. Not for working more than is absolutely necessary.

HESLER. No, no—of course you have other things—and others—to live for.—Do you intend to remain here for the rest of your days?

WANGEL. Oh yes, that's what it will come to, I suppose. Here I have lived very very happily with her who was taken from us. And now I live very very happily with one who has come to me in her stead.—I must say that, take it all in all, the fates have been kind to me.

HESLER. Is your wife not at home to-day?

WANGEL. Oh yes, she'll be here very soon. She has

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gone to bathe. She never misses a day at this season; no matter what the weather may be.

HESLER. Is she out of health?

WANGEL. No, not exactly; but she has been curiously nervous the last couple of years or so. But to get into the sea is life and happiness to her.

HESLER. I remember that of old.

WANGEL. Yes, to be sure, you knew her when you held an appointment out there.

HESLER. Of course. I used often to be at the parsonage while her father was alive.

(MRS. WANGEL, *with a large light cloak over her head and shoulders, comes along the path from the right and through the garden gate.*)

WANGEL (*rising*). Ah, here comes the mermaid!

(MRS. WANGEL *goes quickly up into the veranda.* HESLER *rises and bows.*)

HESLER. H'm—. Have you ever told your husband anything about me—about you and me?

MRS. WANGEL. No, I have not. I don't see that it was my duty. For it never came to anything between us.

HESLER. There you are certainly right. But I mean, have you told him that I once took an unsuccessful step——?

MRS. WANGEL. Not a word of it. I have only told him what is true—that I liked you very much, and that you were the truest and best friend I had out there.

MRS. WANGEL. But you do not know that I was engaged at that time.

HESLER. At that time—engaged!

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MRS. WANGEL. Yes, engaged, as it is called.

HESLER. But that is impossible! You are mistaking the time. I don't believe you knew Wangel then. And anyhow he was not yet a widower.

MRS. WANGEL. I know that, my dear Hesler. But it is not Wangel that I am speaking of.

HESLER. Not Wangel! Another then! But at that time—! Out there in the solitude by the open sea—. I don't remember another creature that I could conceive your——

MRS. WANGEL. Oh, you couldn't conceive the possibility, even if I told you—. No, no—for the whole thing was such utter madness on my part.

HESLER. Do tell me more about this——

MRS. WANGEL. No, no, my dear Hesler—what would be the use? It is enough for you to know that I was not free at that time. And now you do know it.

HESLER. And if you *had* been free at that time——?

MRS. WANGEL. What then?

HESLER. Would your answer have been different?

MRS. WANGEL. To be perfectly frank with you, I don't think it would.

HESLER. Nor I either. But then, what is the use of telling me this?

MRS. WANGEL (*rises nervously*). Because I must have some one I can speak to about it. No, no, don't rise.

HESLER. Wangel, then, knows nothing of the matter?

MRS. WANGEL. No. No one has ever known anything. I did not think there was anything to tell him. After all, it was nothing but the maddest of madness; and then it all came to an end so quickly. Was done with. —At least—in a way.

HESLER (*rising*). Only in a way? Not entirely!

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MRS. WANGEL. Oh yes, of course! My dear good Hesler, it is not at all as you suppose. It's something quite incomprehensible. I don't think I could find words to tell you of it. And even if I could, you would never be able to understand it. You would think I was ill—or else that I was stark mad.

HESLER. My dear Mrs. Wangel—now you must and shall tell me the whole story.

MRS. WANGEL. Well then—how should you, with your common sense, ever be able to understand that—(*Breaks off.*) Wait—another time—here is some one coming.

LYNGSTRAND. Well, you see, when we were lying in the brig over in Montreal, we had to leave our boatswain in the hospital; so we shipped an American in his place. And then we put to sea. We were bound for Spain. This new boatswain——

MRS. WANGEL. The American?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes;—one day he borrowed from the captain a bundle of old newspapers that he had come across somewhere. There were many Norwegian papers among them. And it was mostly those he read.

MRS. WANGEL. The American?

HESLER. Did he know Norwegian?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, he knew some. He had sailed to Norway, he said.

MRS. WANGEL. Well; and then?

LYNGSTRAND. Well, one evening it was blowing great guns. All hands were on deck—all except the boatswain and me. For he had sprained his ankle and couldn't walk; and I wasn't very well and was lying in my bunk. Well, there he sat in the fo'c'sle, reading away as usual at one of the old papers—

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MRS. WANGEL. Was it a Norwegian paper?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, it was [I don't know]. And [But] all of a sudden, I heard him give a kind of a roar. And when I turned and looked at him, I saw that his face was as white as chalk. Then he sat crumpling and crushing the paper up, and tearing it into a thousand little pieces. But that he did quite quietly.

MRS. WANGEL. Did he not speak at all?

LYNGSTRAND. Not at first. But presently he looked at me and said, as if to himself: "She has gone and married another man while I was away."

MRS. WANGEL (*half to herself*). Did he say that?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, and he said it in perfectly good Norwegian. He must have been a Norwegian after all—[must have sailed in Norwegian ships, I should think].

MRS. WANGEL. Well, Mr. Lyngstrand, I am sure you can make a work of art out of this.

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, don't you think so? I think I must be able to.

MRS. WANGEL. Is the dead man to represent what she is dreaming of?

LYNGSTRAND. Oh yes, he is. But then he is to be a real man at the same time.

HESLER. Who is drowned and has come home afterwards?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, I had thought of something of the sort. But I find it so difficult to explain what I mean. You will be able to understand it when I have finished the work.

MRS. WANGEL (*with slight hesitation*). How long may it be since you made that voyage with the American?

LYNGSTRAND. Oh, it's a long while ago now, Mrs. Wangel. It's more than two years ago. We left America

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in February and were wrecked in March. It was the equinoctial gales that we got into.

MRS. WANGEL. Two years, do you say? Yes, that agrees.

HESLER. What, do you mean?

MRS. WANGEL. Oh no, it was only— (*Rises.*) It seems to me so hot here. Come, let us go in.

THEA and FRIDA. Ah!

WANGEL. H'm—. Well, you see, my dear Thora——

MRS. WANGEL. Come along, girls! Let us put these up among the others.

THEA and FRIDA (*throwing their arms around her*). Oh you dear—! How sweet of you!

WANGEL (*puts his arm round her*). Thank you, thank you! I thank you from my heart for this, Thora!

MRS. WANGEL. Oh, nonsense—why should I not join with you in keeping mother's birthday?

(*They go up into the veranda, in joyful excitement.* HESLER *follows them.*)

FROM THE SECOND ACT

FRIDA. Pooh—supposing it is true, what—(*Looks down*). Hullo—here he comes with them in tow! Look there! There she is, walking with Hesler—not with father—and jabbering away to him! I wonder whether she isn't a bit sweet on that Hesler.

WANGEL (*smiling*). Well, in this case it was not necessary to ask any question. I scarcely needed to be told who it was——

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MRS. WANGEL. Could you——!

WANGEL. —so that I was not at all surprised when at last he came here again.

MRS. WANGEL. Who, who?

WANGEL. To be sure, he wrote that it was because of the girls. That he wanted so much to see them again——

MRS. WANGEL (*jestingly*). Oh, then he was careful of what he said.

WANGEL. You too were a girl when he last saw you. And so you must have remained in his recollection.

MRS. WANGEL. But, my dear Wangel, I assure you.——. I beg you——!

WANGEL. Be quite easy about it. I shall not let him see anything. Hesler is a good and faithful friend of mine. I rely on him with as much confidence as I do on yourself.

MRS. WANGEL. That you may certainly do. But I tell you—it was not Hesler.

WANGEL. H'm, how obstinate you can be at times. Wasn't Hesler tutor out there on the island the winter before he came to us?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, he was.

WANGEL. Well. And wasn't it just that winter that this took place, this affair of the engagement?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, you're right there again.

WANGEL. Very well. Then will you tell me, my dear good Thora, whether at that time there was any other decent, respectable unmarried man out there, to whom this might refer?

MRS. WANGEL. No. There was certainly no such person.—But——

WANGEL. But——?

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MRS. WANGEL. Well, now I must and will tell you. It was not any decent, respectable man——

WANGEL (*starts up*). Not any decent, respectable——!

MRS. WANGEL. Not one that *you* would call so.

WANGEL. What is there behind all this? Let me hear the whole story.

MRS. WANGEL. Do you remember that, in the late autumn one year, a large American ship came into Skioldvik for repairs?

WANGEL. Yes, I remember it well. It was on board her that the captain was found murdered in his cabin one morning. I remember going to make the post-mortem.

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, I know you did.

WANGEL. It was an ordinary seaman who had killed him.

MRS. WANGEL. No one can tell that! It was never proved.

WANGEL. There is no doubt about it. Why, he ran away immediately afterwards. Though, to be sure, some people thought he had gone and drowned himself.

MRS. WANGEL. He did not. He escaped in a vessel bound for the north.

WANGEL (*starts*). How do you know that?

MRS. WANGEL. Because, Wangel—because it was that ordinary seaman to whom I was betrothed.

WANGEL. What do you say? Can this be possible?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, he was the man.

WANGEL. But how in the world, Thora—! And as far as I remember he was nothing but a lad at the time.

MRS. WANGEL. Oh no, he was at any rate a year or two older than I. But we were both young, of course.

WANGEL. And you went and engaged yourself to him! What was his name?

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MRS. WANGEL. He called himself Johnson.

WANGEL. Where did he come from?

MRS. WANGEL. I don't know.

WANGEL. But you can tell whether he was a Norwegian or a foreigner?

MRS. WANGEL. I don't know for certain. He spoke good Norwegian. But there was something foreign about it.

WANGEL. Then did you never ask him?

MRS. WANGEL. No, not very often. Not so much as five times altogether, I think. For then came this affair about the captain; and he had to go away.

WANGEL. Oh yes, let me hear about that.

MRS. WANGEL. Early one morning, in the dusk, I got a line from him, and it said that I must come out to him at Bakkehammer—you know, the headland between the parsonage and Skioldvik——

WANGEL. Yes, yes—I know.

MRS. WANGEL. —I must come there immediately, for he wanted to speak to me.

WANGEL. And you went?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, you may be sure I did—then. Well, he said that he had stabbed the captain in the night——

WANGEL. He told you himself! Straight out!

MRS. WANGEL. Yes. But he had only done what was right and just, he said.

WANGEL. Right and just? What reason did he give, then, for stabbing him?

MRS. WANGEL. He would not tell me the reason. He said it was not a thing for me to hear about.

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WANGEL. And you believed him?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, you may be sure I did—then. Well, he had to go away. But when he was on the point of saying good-bye to me, he did a strange thing. He did it quite calmly and quietly. For that was his way. Always calm and quiet.

WANGEL. What was it he did?

MRS. WANGEL. He took a key-ring out of his pocket, and drew off his finger a ring he used to wear. Then he took from me a little ring that I had, and these two he fastened together on the key-ring. Then he said that now we two should together be wedded to the sea.

WANGEL. Wedded——?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, so he said. And then he flung the large ring and the two small ones far, far out into the sea. Don't you think that was strange?

WANGEL. And you—? Did you agree to that?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, would you believe it, at the time I only thought that it was something—that it was all as it should be. But then he went away.

WANGEL. And when once he was away?

MRS. WANGEL. Oh, good heavens, you can understand, my dear, that I soon saw how utterly foolish and stupid and meaningless the whole thing had been.

WANGEL. Yes, yes. But was that the end of it? Did you never hear from him afterwards?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, I heard from him.

WANGEL. He wrote——?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes. As soon as he reached England I got a line or two from him. He said he was going on to America, and told me where to address a letter.

WANGEL. Did you write?

MRS. WANGEL. Immediately. I said, of course, that all must be over between us—that he must never think

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of me again, as I meant never to think any more of him.

WANGEL. Did he stop then?

MRS. WANGEL. No.

WANGEL. He wrote again.

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, he wrote again.

WANGEL. And what was his answer to what you had said?

MRS. WANGEL. Not a word. He wrote just as if I had never broken with him. He told me quite calmly that I must wait for him. When he was ready for me he would let me know, and then I was to come to him at once.

WANGEL. He would not release you?

MRS. WANGEL. No. So I wrote again, almost word for word the same as before: only more strongly.

WANGEL. And did he give way?

MRS. WANGEL. Oh, no, far from it. He wrote as calmly as before. Never a word about my having broken with him. Then I saw it was useless, so I wrote to him no more.

WANGEL. But he——?

MRS. WANGEL. I have had three letters from him since. Once he wrote from California and once from China. The last letter I got from him was from Australia. He said he was going to the gold-mines; since then I have heard nothing more from him.

WANGEL. That man must have had an extraordinary power over you, Thora.

MRS. WANGEL. Oh yes, yes. That dreadful man! Oh, how happy and secure I felt when you and I came together. It seemed to me as if you had saved me from myself—and from something terrible both within me and without.

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WANGEL. (*in a low voice*). Yes, we were happy indeed—the first three years.

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, yes, we were. And then—to think of it—then this—this other thing was to come over me.

WANGEL. This mental ailing, you mean? Yes, it is hard. Hard for us both. But do try now to calm yourself, my dear, my precious Thora. We will try another cure for you now. A fresher air than in here. The salt-laden, sweeping sea-breezes, dear! What do you say to that?

MRS. WANGEL. Oh, don't speak of it! Don't think of such a thing! There is no help for me in that. I know, I feel, that I should not be able to throw it off out there either.

WANGEL. To throw off what, dear? What do you mean?

MRS. WANGEL (*as though brooding over something*). I mean the terror of him.

WANGEL. Yes, but what is it after all that is so terrible to you?

MRS. WANGEL (*looking at him despondingly*). What I have just told you.

WANGEL. Well—terrible? But would you really call it so? No doubt that man once exercised a tremendous power over you. That one can easily understand. But such a thing is not nearly so rare as you seem to think. I have had opportunities of observing several similar cases. And besides—you had the strength to break it all off. To put an end to it as soon as you were able to reflect a little. What is there left to brood over? It is all over, long ago.

MRS. WANGEL (*springs up*). No, that is just what it is not! And that is the terror of it!

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WANGEL. Not over!

MRS. WANGEL. No, it is not over! And I am afraid it never will be over. Never in this life. That is what is so terrible to think of.

WANGEL (*in a low, agitated voice*). Do you mean to say that you have never in your heart of hearts been able to forget him?

MRS. WANGEL. No, there was a time when he came to mean nothing to me. It was just as though he had never existed. Oh, I felt so free and relieved for those three years. They were the first three years I lived here with you, Wangel.

WANGEL (*in suspense*). And now—! Do you mean then that now it has come over you again?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, now it has come again. With frightful force. It came like this two years ago.

WANGEL (*painfully moved*). Ah! Two years ago? That was it! In that case, Thora, I begin to understand much more clearly.

MRS. WANGEL. You are wrong, dear—this thing that has come over me—oh, I don't think it can ever be understood!

WANGEL (*half to himself*). To think that for two years her heart has been given to a strange man. To another! Not to me—but to another!

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, yes, to you! To you alone! To no one in the whole world.

WANGEL. Oh, Thora! Oh yes, yes, I knew that. But what is it then—. What is it between you and the strange man——?

MRS. WANGEL. It is the dread he casts over me——

WANGEL. Dread?

MRS. WANGEL. Yes, a dread. Such a dread, such a

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terror, as arises only from the sea. For now I must tell you, Wangel——

(*Young people, men and girls, come in from the left, some in couples, some in groups. A few tourists among them. Finally* HESLER, LYNGSTRAND, THEA *and* FRIDA *come. They are no longer walking arm in arm.*)

WANGEL. Dear Thora—why did you cross-question him about that voyage?

MRS. WANGEL. Because I believe—. (*Breaking out.*) Now I have learnt something about Johnson.

WANGEL. What have you learnt?

MRS. WANGEL. Johnson was on board the ship in which Lyngstrand was wrecked. Of that I am perfectly certain.

WANGEL. My dear, what makes you think so?

MRS. WANGEL. Something Lyngstrand mentioned this morning. Johnson came to know, during the voyage—in some way or other—I don't know how. He came to know that I had married. Had married while he was away. And then this came!

WANGEL. What came?

MRS. WANGEL. That Johnson all at once became so fearfully present to me. I seemed to see him before me wherever I went.

WANGEL. Did he appear to you as you had seen him in reality?

MRS. WANGEL. No, I don't see him like that. Not so young as he was then. I see him older. And I see him with a beard. A reddish beard. He did not have a beard then. There is one thing especially that I see with such fearful clearness.

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WANGEL. Now——!

MRS. WANGEL. He always wears a red neck-cloth and it is fastened with a large, bluish-white pearl—a scarf-pin, you know——

WANGEL. Yes, yes.

MRS. WANGEL. And when I think of that pin, it seems to turn into a dead fish's eye, that looks at me. Looks fixedly at me.

WANGEL. Good God—. You are more ill than I thought; more ill than you know yourself, Thora. And you have been in this state for over two years. You have suffered this secret anguish without confiding in me.

MRS. WANGEL. Oh, how could I have the heart to do that. In you! In you, whom I love so dearly. But now I must tell you all. For I feel it closing round me more and more. Therefore I must now tell you the most fearful thing of all.

WANGEL. Yes, tell me that—do tell me that!

MRS. WANGEL. The most fearful thing is that when the strange man became so living to me, then—Oh——

WANGEL. Then?

MRS. WANGEL. Then I seemed to lose you, Wangel!

WANGEL. Lose? How——?

MRS. WANGEL. When you were [are] not present, I could [can] no longer recall [retain] your appearance. It was [is] the strange man that I saw [see] instead of you.

WANGEL. Explain yourself more clearly, Thora.

MRS. WANGEL. I mean that when you are out in a boat and a storm comes on and I am waiting here in mortal fear for you, it is not you that I picture to myself in the boat—. Or rather, it *is* you, but I see you in the likeness of the strange man.—And then the unspeakable.

WANGEL. The unspeakable——?

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MRS. WANGEL. No, no, no!— Only one thing more, and I have done. Wangel—how shall we fathom—that about the child's eyes——

FROM THE THIRD ACT

THORA (*softly and trembling*). Oh, do you hear that, Wangel? He is coming back!

WANGEL. Do not be alarmed. We shall find means to prevent it.

THE STRANGER. Good-bye for the present, Thora. To-morrow evening then.

THORA (*with a shriek*). Don't look at me like that! Oh, the eyes, the eyes!

WANGEL. The eyes! What do you mean by that——

THE STRANGER. And if by that time you should be of a mind to come with me——

THORA. Never! Never to the end of time! Never!

THE STRANGER. I only mean that in that case you must be ready to start. To-morrow evening then, you understand.

THORA. Never, I say! Go, go!

WANGEL. Go into the house, Thora!

THORA. I cannot. Oh, help me! Save me, Wangel!

THE STRANGER. For you must remember this, that if you do not come with me this time, it will be too late.

THORA. Too late——?

THE STRANGER. Beyond recall, Thora. I shall never return to these parts. You will never see me any more nor hear from me either. I shall be as though dead and gone from you, for evermore.

THORA (*breathing as though relieved*). Ah——!

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THE STRANGER. So think carefully what you do. Good-bye. (*He climbs over the fence, stops, and says:*) Well, Thora—be ready to start to-morrow evening; for then I will come and take you away.

(*He goes slowly and calmly along the footpath and out to the right.*)

THORA (*looks after him a while*). Oh, that terrible creature!

WANGEL. Be calm, be calm. He is gone now, and you shall never see him again.

THORA. Oh, how can you say that? He is coming again to-morrow [night].

WANGEL. Let him come: I will see that he does not meet you.

THORA. Do you think you can prevent that? Oh, I don't know any place on earth where I can be safe from him.

WANGEL. Before all else you must try to get him out of your ailing mind.

THORA. Yes, yes, if I only could. (*Looking away.*) So sure he was that I would go with him.— Have you ever heard or seen a man so sure as he is, Wangel!

WANGEL. You must put him out of your thoughts, I say.

THORA. Yes, if one only could.

WANGEL. You must! You must! You don't know what it may lead to otherwise.

THORA (*musing*). When he has been here—to-morrow evening—. And [when] he has gone away in the steamer——.

WANGEL. Well, what then?

THORA. Do you think he will never come again?

WANGEL. No, dear Thora, you may feel absolutely secure on that point.

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THORA. Never again? Never as long as life lasts. Do you think that?

WANGEL. That I am certain of. You will never see him again.

THORA (*involuntarily*). Never——

WANGEL. How can you be afraid of that? What could he do here after this? Do look at it reasonably, dear. He has heard now, from your own lips, that you will have nothing to do with him.

THORA. No. That is certain. To-morrow evening—. And then never again.

FROM THE FOURTH ACT

WANGEL. Tell me, Mr. Lyngstrand—that American you were speaking of yesterday—do you know much about him?

LYNGSTRAND. No, not much. Only that we were shipmates one voyage.

WANGEL. Do you remember his name?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, it was Frimann, or something like that.

WANGEL. And then he shipped as nothing more than boatswain.

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, it was a boatswain we happened to want. And he wanted to get across. So he took the berth.

WANGEL. Now he is travelling as a tourist, it seems.

LYNGSTRAND. Did you see him too, Doctor?

WANGEL. I saw a stranger pass below there. It must have been he.— Tell me, what sort of a man did you think he was? I mean, when you were shipmates with him.

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LYNGSTRAND. He seemed to me to be a quiet, calm man. But very determined.

WANGEL. Very determined?

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, he was. But that was in a quiet way, too. I only remember one time when he became quite ungovernable.

WANGEL. Oh yes. That time you were speaking of yesterday——.

LYNGSTRAND. —that I am going to put into sculpture, yes. I am so glad both you and Mrs. Wangel think so well of that idea.

WANGEL. How—? Oh yes, yes.

(*He goes over to* HESLER, *who is standing by the piano.*)

ANNETTE (*softly to* LYNGSTRAND). I'll wager my life it was the strange man who came and enquired.

LYNGSTRAND. For Mrs. Wangel!

ANNETTE. I don't know whom he enquired for.

LYNGSTRAND. Yes, it was Mrs. Wangel. But what on earth——!

ANNETTE. Well, come along. Come along.

(*She and* LYNGSTRAND *go with* FRIDA *down through the garden.*)

WANGEL (*to* HESLER). Have you given any more thought to it?

HESLER. I have thought of nothing else, ever since we parted.

WANGEL. And what do you think I ought to do in the matter?

HESLER. My dear Doctor, I think that you, as a physician, ought to know better than I.

WANGEL. H'm. This is no common disorder. And no case for an ordinary physician—or for ordinary remedies.

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HESLER. How is she to-day?

WANGEL. I have just been up to see her, and she appeared to me quite calm. But behind all her moods something seems to be hidden that eludes me entirely. And then she is so variable, so incalculable, so subject to sudden changes.

HESLER. No doubt that is due to her morbid state of mind.

WANGEL. Not entirely. The germ of it all is innate in her. Thora belongs to the sea-folk: that is the trouble.

HESLER. What do you mean precisely, my dear Doctor?

WANGEL. The people who live out by the open sea are like a race apart. Widely different from the people of the fiords. Out there they live the life of the sea. And they never bear transplantation. I should have thought of that before. It was a sin against her to take her away from the sea and bring her in here.

HESLER. Have you come to look at it in that light?

WANGEL. Yes, more and more. Especially in the last year or two.—But I ought to have known it from the first. I ought to have known that she would inevitably pine and languish in here. Oh, I did know it too, but I would not acknowledge it. I loved her so much. And consequently I thought first of myself. In fact, I was utterly and unpardonably selfish.

HESLER. I am afraid every one is selfish under those circumstances. But I can't say that I have noticed that vice in you.

WANGEL. Oh yes. But I try to fight against it.

HESLER. Let us speak frankly. Was it mutual affection that brought you and her together?

WANGEL. No, I can't say it was. Not that kind of

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feeling on her side. When her father was drowned—her mother was subject to melancholy, you know—the new lighthouse-keeper was expected. They had to leave the house. Oh, I ought never to have availed myself of her helpless situation. But I did so nevertheless.

HESLER. And it was only gradually that you won her?

WANGEL. I thought at any rate that I had won her. There seemed to be signs of that. But then this melancholy came upon her. Oh, what remorse I felt. For I was to blame. I had taken her by surprise. Almost by force, I may say. For, you see, she had no choice. And I was at my wits' end to know what to do.— That is why I turned to you in my perplexity, and asked you to come to us.

HESLER. Yes, my dear Doctor, but what good did you suppose *I* could do? I don't understand.

WANGEL. No. For I had got upon a wrong scent. I fancied that she had once cared for you, and that she still secretly cared for you. So I thought it might perhaps do her good to see you again.

HESLER. Then it was your wife you meant when you wrote that some one here was waiting for me!

WANGEL. Yes; who else?

HESLER. Of course. But I did not understand you.

WANGEL. Naturally not. I was on a wrong scent.

HESLER. Then, although you thought your wife had an inclination for me—cared for me—you nevertheless wrote for me. Asked me to come here——

WANGEL. I was bent upon seeing her cheerful again. Rejecting no expedient. Come of it what might.

HESLER. And you think you are selfish——

WANGEL. Oh, I had such a great error to atone for. But don't tell her I wrote for you. She believes you came here of your own accord. Tell her nothing.

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HESLER. Not a word, since you wish it. Well, after all, it was a good thing I came here. That the misunderstanding was cleared up. For now you know that her heart is not with any other man.

WANGEL. No, it is wholly and solely the dread of this stranger that haunts her thus.

HESLER. How do you explain the power he exercises over her?

WANGEL. H'm, my dear friend, there are sides to that question that don't admit of explanation.

HESLER. Something inexplicable, do you mean? Entirely inexplicable?

WANGEL. Inexplicable to the understanding of our time, at any rate. To the science of our time.

HESLER. Do you believe in such things?

WANGEL. I neither believe nor disbelieve. I simply do not know. So I suspend my judgment. [For I am not really a man of science, I must tell you. I have——]

HESLER. But tell me—. That strange, uncanny idea of hers about the child's eyes——?

WANGEL (*eagerly*). I don't in the least believe that about the eyes. That is pure imagination on her part. I take that to be nothing but an outcome of her morbid nervous condition. Nothing else!

HESLER. But then the other point: that this haunting fear, this dread and unrest came upon her just at the very time when this stranger would seem to have been on his way home?

WANGEL. Well, that again is a belief she has imagined and dreamt herself into, since the day before yesterday. It did not come upon her at all so suddenly, so instantaneously, as she now maintains. But since she heard from this young Lyngstrand that Johnson, or whatever he is called, was on his way home three years ago in

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March, she believes that her mental suffering came over her in the very same month.

HESLER. And did it [not]?

WANGEL. Not at all. It had been noticeable long before that. It is true she had a sharp attack precisely in the month of March, three years ago——

HESLER. Well then——!

WANGEL. Oh, but that is quite easily accounted for by the circumstances—the condition—she happened to be in at that time.

HESLER. The indications may be read in either way, then.

WANGEL. And to be powerless to help her! To have neither resource nor remedy!

HESLER. What if you made up your mind to a change of residence—to move to some other place, where you would live under wider, less restricted conditions?

WANGEL. I have suggested that to her. But she will not.

HESLER. Not that either.

(*Goes up towards the window on the left.*)

WANGEL. Oh, I should be so glad to make any possible sacrifice.

(TORA *enters by the door on the left.*)

TORA (*rapidly to* WANGEL). Be sure you do not go out this morning!

WANGEL. No, no, certainly not; I will stay at home with you. (*Points to* HESLER.) But you haven't said good morning——?

TORA (*turns*). Oh, are you there, Mr. Hesler! (*Holds out her hand.*) Good morning.

HESLER. Good morning, Mrs. Wangel. So you're not bathing to-day?

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TORA. No, no. Don't speak to me of bathing. The water is sickly here in the fiord. Won't you sit down?

HESLER. No, thank you. Not now. (*Looks at* WANGEL.) I promised the girls I would join them in the garden.

WANGEL. Well, my dear friend—I won't keep you.

TORA. You will probably find them by the pond.

HESLER. I shall find them, I'm sure.

(*He nods and passes across the veranda and out to the right.*)

WANGEL (*rising*). Then have the years we have lived together been utterly wasted for you?

TORA. Oh, don't think that. I have had all from you that any one could possibly desire. But the years have given me a clearer insight. The sense of shame has awakened in me. I see it now—the life we lead is no real and true marriage.

WANGEL. I can strengthen you in fighting against it.

TORA. Yes, if I had the *will* to fight against it.

WANGEL. Have you not the will?

TORA. Oh, that is just what I don't know.

WANGEL. You must try to make sure of yourself. The decision is to-night.

TORA. Yes, think of it—! The decision so near. The decision for all time.

WANGEL. To-morrow he will be gone. Then you will be free [of him]. [And then you will be free of all your doubts——]

TORA. Perhaps I shall have forfeited my true future.

WANGEL. Your true——?

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TORA. A life of freedom forfeited!

WANGEL. Tora—do you love this man [stranger]?

TORA. Do I—? Oh how can I tell.

WANGEL. That you must try to find out.

TORA. It is no use. I only know that to me he is mysterious, and that——oh!

WANGEL. —and that——?

TORA. —and that I feel as though my place were with him.

WANGEL. I begin to understand.

TORA. And what help have you for me? What remedy do you know of?

WANGEL. To-morrow. He will be gone. Then you will be safe from disaster; then I promise to set you free. We will cancel the bargain, Tora!

TORA. Oh Wangel——!

WANGEL (*looks out into the garden*). More another time.

(ARENHOLDT, ANNETTE, LYNGSTRAND, FRIDA, *and* BALLESTED *appear behind the arbour.* BALLESTED *is carrying his painting materials.*)

ARENHOLDT (*coming up on to the veranda*). Ah, I can tell you we have been laying great plans.

FRIDA. We want to go out in a boat this evening, and——

LYNGSTRAND. [B.] No, no, don't tell!

WANGEL. We two have also been laying plans.

ARENHOLDT. No, really?

WANGEL. My wife is going to Skioldvik for a time.

ANNETTE. Going away?

ARENHOLDT. That is very wise.

WANGEL. Tora wants to go home again; home to the sea.

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LYNGSTRAND. "The Lady from the Sea." Yes, one can understand that.

BALLESTED. Understand it perfectly. The dying mermaid on the dry land——

TORA. Why do you call me that!

BALLESTED. Oh no. I was only thinking of my picture. Good-bye, good-bye.

(*Goes out by the garden gate.*)

FRIDA (*softly to* ANNETTE). Now they've been having another conference.

(*A maid-servant opens the door on the right.*)

WANGEL. To table. Come along, Arenholdt! We will drink a parting cup with "the lady from the sea."

(*They all go towards the door on the right.*)

FROM THE FIFTH ACT

ELLIDA. I *must* speak with him myself. If you will not set me free, then he must do so. One of the marriages must be dissolved.

WANGEL. You yourself have dissolved the relationship that in your morbid excitability you call a marriage. You have dissolved it and that is enough.

ELLIDA. No, no, that is not enough. What is the use of your putting forward a thousand rational arguments. It does not help me in the least, if my own feelings are different.

WANGEL. And they are so still.

ELLIDA. They will always be so. I shall always feel as I do now. I am not made like you. You can lead your life of reality here with me, and feel secure and happy in it—and at the same time continue to live with your memories.

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WANGEL. Oh, if I could only make you understand how immensely different the two things are!

ELLIDA. Not to me. I cannot lead such a dual existence. I cannot continue in it any longer. Impossible! Perfectly impossible. Either wholly with you or wholly with him!

WANGEL. All these are confused feminine ideas, Ellida! Confused feminine fancies. What do you gain by his releasing you from your promise, as you call it. Does that make you free? Do you suppose it will break the power he exercises over you?

ELLIDA. Ah, I don't know! I don't know.

WANGEL. Oh yes, you may be sure that it will not be so. It is not from without that your liberation will come. Not from any one else. It is from within—from yourself that liberation must come.

ELLIDA. Oh yes, yes. Do you think I don't feel that. But you see, Wangel—that is just the terrible part of it, that——

WANGEL. That——?

ELLIDA. —that I often feel as though I did not wish for liberation either.

WANGEL. Then I know no help for you.

ELLIDA. Oh, don't say that so confidently. There must surely be something in the world—something between heaven and earth, that could force my will to extricate me from all this.

WANGEL. I know of nothing.

ELLIDA. And yet it is you I count upon, Wangel. You I expect help from. You alone.

WANGEL. From me, with whom you will not live any longer.

ELLIDA. Will?

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WANGEL. Yes, will.

ELLIDA. Say rather, *can.*

WANGEL (*looks searchingly at her*). In that there is hope.

ELLIDA. Yes, do you not think so.

ANNETTE. How could father say such a thing!

ASKEHOLM. It appears that was not what he meant. But I came here in that belief. And I think it is quite excusable, Annette. So many a young girl comes to regard her tutor with more than ordinary attachment——

ANNETTE. Yes, yes, I know that [—in her school-days].

ASKEHOLM. I have myself more than once had occasion to observe something of the sort. But then the young girls leave school and enter life. Other connections are formed, and nothing is left of their relation to the tutor than a warm friendship—a little bashful, perhaps——

ANNETTE. Yes, that is just how it is——!

ASKEHOLM. —a little inclined to avoid dwelling on school-days [the last year at school]. Well then, I got your father's letter——

ANNETTE. Yes, but that letter——

ASKEHOLM. Now you mustn't interrupt me, dear Annette. I thought at any rate that I had come upon an exception. I accustomed myself to the thought that here was a young girl waiting and longing for me to come again. When a man, like myself, is no longer in the first flush of youth, such a belief or illusion makes an exceedingly strong impression. A vivid affection for you grew up in me, Annette. I felt I must come to you;

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see you again; tell you that I shared the feelings which I imagined you entertained for me.

ANNETTE. But now, when you know that it was not so——?

THE STRANGER. I was not thinking of travelling-clothes and trunks and that sort of thing. I have on board with me everything she requires for the voyage; and I have taken a cabin. (*To* ELLIDA.) I ask, if you will go with me.

ELLIDA. If I will——!

THE STRANGER. Yes, you must choose now. In half an hour it will be too late.

ELLIDA. What makes you hold to me so persistently?

THE STRANGER. Do you not feel, as I do, that we two belong to each other?

ELLIDA. Do you mean because of that promise, which——?

THE STRANGER. Promises bind no one: neither man nor woman. If I hold to you persistently, it is because I cannot do otherwise.

ELLIDA. Why did you not come sooner?

WANGEL. Ellida——!

(THE STRANGER *climbs slowly over the garden fence and comes nearer.*)

ELLIDA (*shrinks behind* WANGEL). What is it? What do you want?

THE STRANGER. You ask why I did not come sooner.

ELLIDA. Yes, I asked that.

THE STRANGER. Three years ago I was on my way to you. At last I had been so far successful that I could come for you. Take you home with me, Ellida.

WANGEL. Where is your home?

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THE STRANGER. A little everywhere. Spread over the whole earth. And over the whole sea too, I think.

ELLIDA. And to that vast home you would have brought me then!

THE STRANGER. I would have, yes. But then came the shipwreck in the Channel. All gone, lock, stock and barrel, all that I had scraped together. Then to work again. For you, Ellida. Now I am back here. For the last time. Will you come with me? Or will you stay here with him!

WANGEL (*looking at her*). Choose!

ELLIDA. Oh, I cannot—! I don't know——!

(*A bell is heard in the distance.*)

THE STRANGER. There goes the warning bell. Now you must say yes or no.

ELLIDA. To have to decide! To decide for all time! To do what can never be undone!

THE STRANGER. Never.

ELLIDA. If I went with you——?

WANGEL. If you went——!

ELLIDA. —should I be going to my happiness!

THE STRANGER. You must find that out. I cannot tell you anything certain.

ELLIDA. Oh, what is it that tempts and allures and seems to drag me into the unknown! The whole might of the sea is centred in this one thing.

WANGEL. I see it. I see it. Step by step you are gliding away from me.

ELLIDA. If I let him go away alone—. If I stay behind with you—Wangel—can you assure me that I shall never come to regret it?

WANGEL. Never regret——?

ELLIDA. Yes, yes, for it can never be undone! Can you assure me that I shall never come to regret it?

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WANGEL. No, Ellida—I cannot.

(*The bell is heard again.*)

THE STRANGER (*to* ELLIDA). There is the second bell.

ELLIDA (*goes up to him and lays her hand on his arm.*) Then I am going with you.

WANGEL (*to himself*). I knew it.

THE STRANGER. At last you have made your choice, Ellida.

ELLIDA. There is no choice in this. I am going with you because I must. Cannot do otherwise.

THE STRANGER. No, for I am the strongest. But now you shall hear what I have to offer you. I would not tell you anything before. For I did not wish to entice you. Of your own will you were to go where I go. But now you shall hear——

ELLIDA. I will hear nothing! It is the unknown that draws me. Into that I will go.

WANGEL. Let me give you a little assistance on the way, Ellida.

ELLIDA. What do you mean?

WANGEL. I do not wish your happiness to be clouded by remorse or regret at the thought of me. You are not leaving me against your will. I set you free. I cancel our bargain.

ELLIDA. Is this true, Wangel. Do you mean it from your inmost heart?

WANGEL. Yes, from the inmost depths of my heart I mean it.

ELLIDA. And can you do it!

WANGEL. I can, because I love you.

ELLIDA. And you have come to love me so truly and so dearly.

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WANGEL. The years of our marriage have brought this about.

ELLIDA. And I have been blind to it.

WANGEL. Your thoughts went in other directions. Listen to me, Ellida. It would have been easy for me to prevent your going away with this stranger. I do not prevent you. You are now a free woman, with full right to go where you will.

ELLIDA. This transforms everything.

(*The steamer bell rings for the third time.*)

THE STRANGER. Do you hear! Come away!

ELLIDA. I can never go with you after this.

THE STRANGER. You will not go!

ELLIDA (*to* WANGEL). After this I can never leave you.

WANGEL. Ellida——!

THE STRANGER. It is all over then.

ELLIDA. Yes, irrevocably.

THE STRANGER. I see there is something that is stronger than my will.

ELLIDA. Your will has no longer a feather's weight with me. For me you are a dead man, who has come back from the sea. But I am no longer in terror. And you fascinate me no more.

THE STRANGER. Good-bye, Ellida! (*He vaults over the fence.*) Henceforth you are nothing but a half-forgotten dream in my life.

(*He goes out to the left.*)

WANGEL. How came this transformation?

ELLIDA. Oh, do you not understand that it came through liberation.

WANGEL. And the unknown fascinates you no longer.

ELLIDA. No longer. I was free to choose it; and therefore I was able to reject it.

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WANGEL. And now you will come to me again, will you not, Ellida?

ELLIDA (*throwing herself on his neck*). Yes, Wangel —now I will come to you again. I can now, for now I come to you in freedom.

WANGEL. Ellida! Ellida! Oh, to think that we two can now live for each other——

ELLIDA. —and for our memories. Yours as well as mine——

WANGEL. Yes, can we not, dearest!

ELLIDA. —and for our two children, Wangel!

WANGEL. Ours—! (*Kisses her hands joyfully and quickly.*) Oh, I thank you for that word more than I can tell!

(ARNHOLM, ANNETTE, LYNGSTRAND, FRIDA, BALLESTED, *and a number of townspeople and summer visitors come along the footpath.*)

FRIDA. Just look, isn't father gallant.

BALLESTED. It is summer time, miss.

ARNHOLM. The English steamer is under way.

LYNGSTRAND. The last trip of the season.

BALLESTED. "Soon will all the straits be ice-bound," as the poet says. It is sad, Mrs. Wangel. But I stick to what I've said. Human beings really *can* acclam—acclimatise themselves.

ELLIDA. Yes, in freedom they can, Mr. Ballested.

(*The great steamer glides noiselessly down the fiord. The music is heard closer inshore.*)

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HEDDA GABLER

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

HENRIK IBSEN

1890

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The pale, apparently cold beauty. Expects great things of life and the joy of life.

The man who has now finally won her, homely in appearance, but honourable, and a gifted, liberal-minded man of science.

Hedda: I have no gift for anything but being bored. That life should have nothing in the world to offer one. Supposing he were to go in for politics.

Brack. That is not in his line.

H. But perhaps I could get him into it.

Do you think he would ever get into the ministry.

Brack. For that he would have to be a very rich man.

H. Yes and then—I doubt if it would bring me any satisfaction in the long run.

*

Lövborg: I have led a rather wild life, they say. Now I have to make amends.

But I cannot renounce.

NB!

Brack had always thought that Hedda's short engagement to Tesman would come to nothing.

Hedda speaks of how she felt herself set aside, step by step, when her father was no longer in favour, when he retired and died without leaving anything.—It then came upon her, in her bitterness, that it was for his sake she had

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been made much of.—And then she was already between 25 and 26. In danger of becoming an old maid.

She thinks that in reality Tesman only feels a vain pride in having won her. His solicitude for her is the same as is shown for a thoroughbred horse or a valuable sporting dog.—This, however, does not offend her. She merely regards it as a fact.

Hedda says to Brack that she does not think Tesman can be called ridiculous. But in reality she finds him so. Later on she finds him pitiable as well.

Tesman: Could you not call me by my Christian name?

Hedda: No, indeed I couldn't—unless they had given you some other name than the one you have.

Tesman puts Lövborg's manuscript in his pocket so that it may not be lost. Afterwards it is Hedda who, by a casual remark, with tentative intention, gives him the idea of keeping it.

Then he reads it. A new line of thought is revealed to him. But the strain of the situation increases. Hedda awakens his jealousy.

*

In the 3rd act one thing after another comes to light about Lövborg's adventures in the course of the night. At last he comes himself, in quiet despair. "Where is the manuscript?" "Did I not leave it behind me here?" He does not know that he has done so. But after all, of what use is the manuscript to him now! He is writing of the "moral doctrine of the future"! When he has just been let out of the police cells!

Hedda's despair is that there are doubtless so many chances of happiness in the world, but that she cannot

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discover them. It is the want of an object in life that torments her.

When Hedda beguiles T. into leading E. L. into ruin, it is done to test T.'s character.

It is in Hedda's presence that the irresistible craving for excess always comes over E. L.

Tesman cannot understand that E. L. could wish to base his future on injury to another.

Hedda. Do I hate T.? No, not at all. I only find him boring.

Brack. But nobody else thinks so.

Hedda. Neither is there any one but myself who is married to him.

Brack. . . . not at all boring.

Hedda: Heavens, you always want me to express myself so correctly. Very well then. T. is not boring, but I am bored by living with him.

Hedda: . . . had no prospects. Well, perhaps you would have liked to see me in a convent (home for unmarried ladies).

Hedda: . . . then isn't it an honourable thing to profit by one's person? Don't actresses and others turn their advantages into profit? I had no other capital. Marriage—I thought it was like buying an annuity.

Hedda: Remember that I am the child of an old man—and a worn-out man too—or past his prime at any rate—Perhaps that has left its mark.

Brack: Upon my word, I believe you have begun to brood over problems.

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Hedda: Well, what cannot one lapse into when one has gone and got married.

Miss R. (*walking about the room*). There. Now we can see all the finery. Yes, yes—it looks well, Berta. Flowers everywhere.

Berta. They were all sent in last night. So that they might keep fresh of course. But this a lady brought herself—just before you came, Miss.

Miss Rising. Yes, that is as it ought to be. When a young couple come home from their honeymoon——

FROM THE FIRST ACT

Miss Rising. Oh well—just at first. You must do as well as you can.

Berta. Most like she'll be terrible grand in her ways.

Miss Rising. Well, you can't wonder at that. Think of the sort of life she was accustomed to in her father's time.

Berta. Yes, and if I only had to do with Master Axel, it would be easy enough.

Miss Rising. No, Axel is not difficult to please. If he only has what he has always been accustomed to, he's satisfied. But by-the-bye, you mustn't call him Master Axel any more. In future you must say Dr. Tesman.

Tesmen. Yes, you may be sure I have.

Miss Rising. And what do you think of it?

Tesman. I'm delighted. This is the very house Hedda wanted to live in. She said often and often, before

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we were engaged, that she would never care to live anywhere but in Secretary Falk's villa.

MISS RISING. And how lucky it was that this very house should be to let [for sale].

TESMAN. Yes, you may be sure I was glad to hear of it. And Hedda too—when you wrote about it. And how comfortably you have arranged it all.

MISS RISING. So you really think that, dear Axel?

TESMAN [(*rising*)]. Yes, it is simply splendid, I think.

MISS RISING. So do I. And Judge Brack says the same.

TESMAN (*looking round*). [(*feeling the chairs.*)] Fancy—carved furniture! What I have always been wanting.

MISS RISING. Well, you see, now you will be made professor, and then you will at once have your own salary to depend upon——

TESMAN. That is a matter of course. But in any case I am not yet appointed.

MISS RISING. Oh, you may be sure they will be quick about appointing you—as soon as they hear you are home again.

TESMAN. Yes, that may be so. But just suppose that to-morrow I fall down in the street and lie there!

MISS RISING (*laughing*). Oh, there is no fear of that. A man who is born to make a noise in the world, he doesn't fall down in the street, you may be sure. The people who want to stand in your way, they fall. Holger Lövborg—his fall was the worst. And now he has to lie on the bed he has made for himself—poor [unfortunate] creature.

TESMAN. Have you heard anything of him? Since I went away?

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MISS RISING. Only that he has published a new book——

TESMAN. What! Recently?

MISS RISING. Yes, but heaven knows whether it can be worth much? Ah—when *your* new book appears, Axel! That will be another story, won't it!

TESMAN. Yes, it won't be long now, Auntie. For now it will be very easy for me—I feel that.

(HEDDA, *in a morning gown, enters by the corner door on the left.*)

MISS RISING (*going to meet her*). Good morning, my dear Hedda! Good morning!

HEDDA (*holds out her hand*). Good morning, dear Aunt! So early a call! That is kind of you.

MISS RISING. Well—has the bride slept well in her new home?

HEDDA. Oh yes, thanks—passably. But of course one has always to accustom one's self to new surroundings. Little by little. (*Looking towards the left.*) Oh—there the servant has gone and opened the veranda door, and let in a whole flood of sunshine.

MISS RISING (*going towards the door*). I will shut——

HEDDA. No, no, not that. Tesman, please let down the Venetian blinds. That will give a softer light.

TESMAN (*goes to the door*). All right—all right—There now, Hedda, now you have both fresh air and shade.

HEDDA. Yes, fresh air we certainly must have, with all these stacks of flowers—. (*At the table.*) H'm,—we shall never get on with this servant.

MISS RISING. Not get on with Berta——!

TESMAN. You don't know how good Berta is.

HEDDA. Well, but just look here. She has left her

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old bonnet lying about on a chair. Just fancy, if any one should come in and see it!

TESMAN. Why Hedda! That's Aunt Jane's bonnet!

HEDDA. What! No really——

MISS RISING (*taking up the bonnet*). And, what's more, it's not old, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. No, of course—I can see that now.

MISS RISING (*half in tears*). And I only bought it in honour of your coming home.

HEDDA. But my dear good Miss [Aunt] Rising——

MISS RISING (*tying on the bonnet*). Yes, indeed I did.

HEDDA. No, but look here, Aunt Jane——

TESMAN. Hedda is a little short-sighted, you know, Auntie——

MISS RISING. Well, well, I'm sure it isn't worth saying any more about such a trifle.—But now I must see about getting back into town. And to Sister Rina, poor dear.—My parasol? Ah, here it is. For this is mine too. (*Mutters.*) Not Berta's. (*Cordially to them both.*) Well, good-bye, good-bye, dears! Good-bye, Axel! Heaven be thanked that everything is well with you.

HEDDA. Good-bye, Aunt Jane!

TESMAN. And mind you come and see us again soon.

MISS RISING. A thousand thanks, my boy. You may be sure I shall. (*She goes out by the hall door.*)

HEDDA. Do you think she was angry with me about that bonnet?

TESMAN. No, not angry. But I think she was a little annoyed.

HEDDA. Well, but what an idea, to pitch her bonnet about in the drawing-room? When she comes to call. How can she think of such a thing? No one does it.

TESMAN. Well you may be sure Aunt Jane won't do it again.

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HEDDA. In any case, I shall manage to make it up with her.

TESMAN. Yes, my dear Hedda, please do that.

HEDDA. I will ask a few good friends to spend the evening with us to-morrow. And then I can ask her at the same time.

TESMAN. Yes, do, Hedda! For remember what she has been to me ever since I was a boy.

HEDDA. And besides, it may be useful to keep her about us. For this servant—we evidently can't depend upon her.

TESMAN. And there's one thing more you could do that would delight her heart.

HEDDA. What is it?

TESMAN. If you could only prevail on yourself—. For my sake, Hedda! If you could say *du* to her in future.

HEDDA. No no, Tesman—you really mustn't ask that of me. I have told you so already. I shall call her "Aunt"—and you must be satisfied with that. I have never said *du* even to my own uncles and aunts.

TESMAN. No no—if you're not used to it—. What are you looking at, Hedda?

HEDDA. Oh, I'm only looking at my old pianoforte. It doesn't go at all well with all the other things.

TESMAN. The first time I draw my salary, I'll see about exchanging it.

HEDDA. No, no—no exchanging. I don't want to part with it. I would rather have it in my own little room, and then get another here in its place. When it's convenient, I mean.

TESMAN. Yes, of course we could do that.

HEDDA (*takes up the bouquet from the piano*). These flowers were not here last night when we arrived.

TESMAN. Aunt Jane must have brought them.

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HEDDA (*examining the bouquet*). A visiting-card (*Takes it and reads.*) "Shall return later in the day." —Can you guess whose card it is?

TESMAN. No. Whose?

HEDDA. Mrs. Elfstad's. An old flame of yours.

TESMAN. Is it really? So Mrs. Elfstad is in town!

HEDDA. It's odd that she should call upon us. I have scarcely seen her since we left school.

TESMAN. I haven't seen her either for—heaven knows how long. I wonder how she can endure to live in such an out-of-the-way hole.

HEDDA (*with sudden animation*). But look here—isn't it somewhere in those parts that he—that—Holger Lövborg is living?

TESMAN (*smiling*). *Your* old flame, Hedda? Yes, he is somewhere in that part of the country.

(BERTA *enters by the hall door.*)

BERTA. That lady, ma'am, that brought some flowers a little while ago, is here again. (*Pointing.*) The flowers you have in your hand, ma'am.

HEDDA. Ah, is she? Well, show her in at once.

(BERTA *opens the door for* MRS. ELFSTAD, *and goes out herself.*)

HEDDA (*receives her warmly*). How do you do, my dear Mrs. Elfstad? How delightful to see you again!

MRS. ELFSTAD (*nervous, but self-controlled*). Yes, it's a very long time since we met.

TESMAN (*gives her his hand*). And we too.

[Thanks, thanks, I hardly knew whether I might call.]

HEDDA. And a thousand thanks for these lovely flowers——

TESMAN. His book? Then he has really published a new book?

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MRS. ELFSTAD. Yes, a big book called "Sociology." Haven't you heard of it, Mr. Tesman?

TESMAN. No, how should I have heard of it?

HEDDA. You see, we've been roving about all over the place——

TESMAN. My aunt did say something about it just now—. When did the book come out?

MRS. ELFSTED. About a fortnight ago. And since it has sold so well, and been so much read—and made such a sensation——

HEDDA. Has it indeed?

TESMAN. It must be something he has had lying by since his better days.

MRS. ELFSTED. Here it is.

(*She hands him a slip of paper.*)

TESMAN. Good, good. Then I'll go in——

HEDDA. Be sure you write him a cordial letter. And a good long one too.

TESMAN. Yes, I will.

MRS. ELFSTED. But please, please don't say anything about me!

TESMAN. No, no—if you don't want me to.

[H. Look there. Take those with you.

T. What are they?

H. Your slippers.

T. Oh yes, I forgot.]

(*He goes out by the door in the corner on the right.*)

HEDDA. No, that's clear.

MRS. ELFSTED. And then my husband sometimes made use of him in his office.—You see, Lövborg was to be had for—for a small salary.

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HEDDA. Did Holger Lövborg have to sit writing in an office!

MRS. ELFSTED. Chiefly when my husband was away on official business.

HEDDA. And your husband—perhaps he is often away from home?

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes. Being sheriff, you know, he has to travel about a good deal in his district.

HEDDA (*leaning towards her, with both hands on her shoulder*). Thea—my poor, sweet Thea—now you must tell me everything—exactly as it stands.

MRS. ELFSTED. Well then, you must question me. Question me about anything you please! And I will try to answer.

HEDDA. What sort of a man *is* your husband, Thea?

MRS. ELFSTED. What sort of a man?

HEDDA. Well, I mean—you know—in everyday life. Is he kind to you?

MRS. ELFSTED. I am sure he means well in everything. And no doubt everyone else thinks so too. I mean, the few people who visit us.

HEDDA. Then you don't see much society.

MRS. ELFSTED. No.

HEDDA. But can you endure it, year after year?

MRS. ELFSTED. No, I cannot. Nor can I endure *that* any more—after this.

HEDDA. Not *that*, you say? Then is there something else?

MRS. ELFSTED. Everything!

HEDDA. Your husband must be much, much older than you. There is at least twenty years' difference between you, is there not?

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, that is true, too. Everything about him is repellent to me! We have not a thought in

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common! We have never had a single point of sympathy —he and I.

HEDDA. But is he not fond of you all the same? At heart? In his own way?

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh no—please don't think that. He regards me simply as a useful property. And then it doesn't cost much to keep me. I am not expensive.

HEDDA. That is stupid of you.

MRS. ELFSTED (*shakes her head*). It cannot be otherwise—not with *him*.

HEDDA. No, no—if you can't make him really care for you——.

MRS. ELFSTED. He can't care for any one but himself—and perhaps a little for the children.

HEDDA. And for Holger Lövborg, Thea.

MRS. ELFSTED (*looking at her*). For Holger Lövborg! What puts that into your head?

HEDDA. Well, my dear—when he lets you go—. When he sends you after him all the way to town.

MRS. ELFSTED (*smiling nervously*). Oh, of course. Yes, yes— (*Vehemently, but not loudly.*) No—I may just as well make a clean breast of it! I can't sit here telling lies any longer. For it must all come out in any case.

HEDDA. Lies! Why, dear Thea——!

MRS. ELFSTED. Well, to make a long story short—. My husband did not know that I was coming.

HEDDA. What! Your husband didn't know it!

MRS. ELFSTED. No, of course not. For that matter, he was away from home himself—he was travelling. I could bear it no longer. I couldn't indeed—so utterly alone as I should have been in future.

HEDDA. Well? And then?

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MRS. ELFSTED. So I put together a few little things—what I needed most—as quietly as possible. And then I left the house.

HEDDA. Without a word?

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes—and took the steamer first. And then the train to town.

HEDDA. Why, my dear, good Thea——!

MRS. ELFSTED. What else could I possibly do?

HEDDA. But what do you think your husband will say when you go home again?

MRS. ELFSTED (*looks at her*). Back to *him?*

HEDDA. Of course.

MRS. ELFSTED (*rises and moves about the room*). I shall never go back to him again.

HEDDA (*turns on the sofa and follows her with her eyes*). Then you have—left house and home—for good and all? Left everything?

MRS. ELFSTED. A thing of that sort cannot be undone.

HEDDA (*rises from the sofa and goes towards her*). But, Thea, did you think well over this?

MRS. ELFSTED. I thought over nothing. I only did what I thought I *had* to do.

HEDDA. And what are your plans now? What do you think of doing?

MRS. ELFSTED. I don't know yet. I only know this, that I *must* live where he is—if I am to live at all.

HEDDA. Sit down a moment—then you will be calmer. (*They seat themselves at the table.*) How did this—this understanding—between you and Holger Lövborg come about?

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, I suppose it grew up gradually. As I saw that I had gained a sort of influence over him.

HEDDA. So you had that?

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MRS. ELFSTED. He gave up his bad habits. Not because I asked him to, for I never dared do that. But of course he saw that they were repulsive to me; and so he dropped everything of that sort.

HEDDA (*with slight mockery*). Then you have reclaimed him—as the saying goes.

MRS. ELFSTED. And he has made a real human being of me—taught me to think, and to understand so many things.

HEDDA. Did he give *you* lessons too, then?

MRS. ELFSTED. No, not exactly lessons. But he talked to me—talked about such an infinity of things.

HEDDA. Scientific things, I suppose.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, that sort of thing. Why do you smile? Remember,—up there I was not situated as you are here. You have your husband to explain so much to you.

HEDDA (*dryly*). Yes, I have. But do you think it amusing to sit and listen to explanations?

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, indeed I do. Don't you think so too?

HEDDA. No, most certainly I don't. I think it horribly boring. (*Glances towards* TESMAN'S *door.*) But that's between ourselves, of course.

MRS. ELFSTED. Everything must be between ourselves. For heaven's sake—all that I've been telling you just now.

HEDDA. Oh, I suppose Tesman may——

MRS. ELFSTED (*struggling with herself*). Hedda—there is—*one* thing more.

HEDDA. And what is that?

MRS. ELFSTED. I don't feel at all sure what will be the end of it—between Holger Lövborg and me. Whether it will be nothing but close friendship—on his side.

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HEDDA. What? Are you not sure of him, then?

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, I think I ought to be now. Now that I have left house and home for his sake. But —but—oh, Hedda, there is *some one* that stands between us.

HEDDA. What do you mean by that?

MRS. ELFSTED. Some one who has hurt him and injured him so profoundly—. But whom I don't believe he can ever forget in spite of that.

HEDDA (*rises slowly, rests her hands on the table and fixes her eyes upon her*). Who is it you mean?

MRS. ELFSTED. Yourself, Hedda.

HEDDA. Can this be—! Hush! (*Glances towards* TESMAN'S *door.*) Hush, he's coming! (*Whispers.*) For God's sake, Thea—let all this be between ourselves!

(AXEL TESMAN, *with a letter in his hand, comes from his room.*)

TESMAN. There now; the letter is finished.

HEDDA. That's right. Mrs. Elfsted and I were thinking of going out.

TESMAN. Good. Then perhaps you will post this when you go.

HEDDA (*takes the letter*). I will tell the maid to.

TESMAN. Yes, of course; that is what I meant.

(BERTA *enters from the hall.*)

BERTA. Judge Brack wishes to know if Mrs. Tesman will receive him.

HEDDA. Yes, ask Judge Brack to come in. And look here—put this letter in the post.

BERTA (*taking the letter*). Yes, ma'am.

(*She opens the door for* JUDGE BRACK *and goes out herself.*)

BRACK. May one venture to call so early in the day?

HEDDA. Of course you may.

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TESMAN. Welcome at any time. (*Introducing him.*) Mrs. Elfsted—Judge Brack.

BRACK. Ah, delighted——

HEDDA. It's nice to see you by daylight, Judge.

BRACK. And I think it's nice to see you and your husband in your home. Where I have been arranging the empty rooms and putting them into shape.

TESMAN. I can't thank you sufficiently.——

BRACK. Oh, pray don't——

HEDDA. Yes, you are a friend indeed——

BRACK. And is Mrs. Hedda tolerably satisfied?

HEDDA. Yes, indeed I am. Of course—there will have to be a little re-arrangement here and there.

BRACK. Oh, we only arranged things just for the present.

HEDDA. And one or two things are still wanting. We shall have to buy some additional trifles.

BRACK. Indeed!

HEDDA (*laughing*). Don't be alarmed! You shall not be troubled with them. I shall see to them myself.

BRACK. Oh, I didn't mean that. (*To* TESMAN.) By-the-bye, I really called on business——

TESMAN. Indeed? Business——?

HEDDA. That's good of you! You want to turn me out.

BRACK. I!

HEDDA. Yes, aren't you threatening to talk about business?—Come along, Thea! (*To* TESMAN.) I shall not be out long.

TESMAN. Just as you please, dear.

HEDDA (*to* BRACK). *Au revoir*, then—when you have done your business.

BRACK. *Au revoir*, Mrs. Hedda.

(HEDDA *and* MRS ELFSTED *go out by the hall door.*)

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Reception-room in Ibsen's house, Christiania

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TESMAN. There. Now we can have a talk. Won't you sit down?

BRACK (*seats himself beside the table*). Thanks, for a moment.

TESMAN (*seating himself*). Then it's business——?

BRACK. Yes, in a way.

TESMAN. I understand. It's the serious part of the frolic that is coming now.

TESMAN. It was Holger Lövborg we were talking about.

HEDDA (*glancing at him rapidly*). Ah——!

TESMAN. And I really can't see what is to become of him.

BRACK. Perhaps I can give you some information on that point.

TESMAN. Indeed!

BRACK. You must not forget that he comes of a powerful family.

TESMAN. He can't count upon those people.

BRACK. Are you so sure of that?

TESMAN. I know that among themselves he is known as the stain on the family.

BRACK. At one time they called him the hope of the family.

TESMAN. At one time—yes. But he has put an end to all that.

HEDDA. He has recovered himself, though.

BRACK. And then this book that he has published—

TESMAN. Well well, I hope to goodness they may find something for him to do. I have just written to him. Asked him to come to us to-morrow evening.

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HEDDA. You come too, Judge Brack. We will have an amusing time.

BRACK. My dear Mr. Tesman—and you too, Mrs. Hedda—I think I ought not to keep you in the dark about something that—that——

TESMAN. That concerns Holger?

BRACK. Both you and him.

TESMAN. Well, my dear Judge, out with it!

BRACK. You must be prepared to find your appointment deferred longer than you desired or expected.

TESMAN. What? Is there some hitch?

BRACK. The nomination may perhaps be made conditional on the result of a competition——.

TESMAN. Competition!

HEDDA. With whom? Ah——!

TESMAN. Surely not——?

BRACK (*rises*). Yes, precisely—Holger Lövborg.

TESMAN (*springs up*). No, no—it's quite inconceivable! Quite impossible!

BRACK. Perhaps that is what it may come to, all the same.

TESMAN. But that would be the most shameful injustice towards me. They had as good as promised me the appointment!

BRACK. Well, and no doubt you will get it in the end; only after a contest.

HEDDA. Fancy—! There will be a sort of sporting interest in that.

TESMAN. Why, Hedda, how can you be so indifferent about it!

HEDDA. I am not at all indifferent. I am most eager to see who wins.

BRACK. In any case, Mrs. Hedda, it is best that you should know the position, before you—before you set

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about the little purchases that you were threatening just now.

HEDDA. This can make no difference.

BRACK. Indeed. Then I have no more to say. Good-bye for the present.

HEDDA. Good-bye, Judge; and be sure you call to-morrow!

BRACK. Many thanks. Good-bye, good-bye.

TESMAN (*accompanying him to the door*). Good-bye, Judge!

(JUDGE BRACK *goes out through the hall.*)

TESMAN. Well, Hedda—you and I must have a serious talk.

HEDDA. Not now, Tesman. I assure you, I haven't time.

TESMAN. No time!

HEDDA. No. I must go and change my dress before lunch.

(*She goes towards the door on the left.*)

TESMAN. But you take this as if it didn't matter at all.

HEDDA (*turns in the doorway*). Why should I not? You are so fond of saying that the strongest always wins.

(*She goes out.*)

TESMAN (*grasps the back of a chair and gazes uneasily before him*). The strongest, yes——

SECOND ACT

The room at the TESMANS' *as in the First Act, except that the piano has been removed, and an elegant little writing-table and an* étagère *put in its place. Some of the bouquets have been removed from the table and placed in the inner room. It is afternoon.*

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HEDDA, *dressed in a tasteful afternoon gown, is alone in the room. She stands by the open door of the veranda, loading a revolver. The other lies in an open case on a chair by her side.*

HEDDA (*looks down the garden and calls*). So you are here again, Judge!

JUDGE BRACK (*is heard calling from below*). As you see, Mrs. Hedda!

HEDDA (*raises the revolver and points*). Now I'll shoot you, Judge Brack.

JUDGE BRACK (*calling unseen*). No, no, no! Don't stand aiming at me!

HEDDA (*fires*). Bang!

BRACK (*outside*). Are you out of your senses——!

HEDDA. Did I hit you?

BRACK (*still outside*). I wish you would let these pranks alone!

HEDDA (*lays the revolver in the case*). Come in then, Judge.

(JUDGE BRACK *enters by the door of the veranda.*)

BRACK. What the deuce are you shooting at?

HEDDA. Thrushes.

BRACK. But the thrushes haven't come yet.

HEDDA. Oh, then I'm firing in the air.

BRACK. What is the good of that?

HEDDA. Then what in heaven's name would you have me do with myself?

BRACK. Have you had no visitors?

HEDDA (*closing the door of the veranda*). Not one. I suppose all our set are still out of town. I have to be content with their flowers and visiting-cards.

BRACK. And is Tesman not at home either?

HEDDA. No, he rushed out of the house as soon as I took up the pistol-case.

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BRACK. Really, Mrs. Hedda!

HEDDA. Oh, you mustn't take it so literally. Though, for that matter, he is almost as much afraid of these things as you are.

(*She takes the case and locks it up in a drawer of the writing-table.*)

BRACK (*standing behind her, still with his overcoat on his arm and his hat in his hand*). So he's not at home.

HEDDA. No—he didn't expect you so early. And then it struck him that he had to go into town and get some new books.

BRACK. Of course. It was stupid of me not to have thought of that before.

HEDDA (*turning her head to look at him*). Why stupid?

BRACK. Because if I had thought of it I should have come—a little—earlier.

HEDDA (*puts the key of the writing-table in her pocket and walks across the room*). Then you would have found no one to receive you; for I have been in my room changing my dress ever since lunch.

BRACK. And is there no sort of a little chink that we could talk through?

HEDDA. Not for you in any case, my good Judge.—But let us sit down and wait. Tesman is not likely to be back for some time yet.

BRACK. Yes and no. To speak frankly, I never imagined that engagement would lead to anything.

HEDDA (*smiling*). The wish was father to the thought.

BRACK (*laughs*). Yes, yes, yes, Mrs. Hedda, so they say.

HEDDA (*jestingly*). Oh, I assure you I have never cherished any illusions with respect to *you*.

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BRACK. All I require is a pleasant and intimate interior, where I can be of assistance in every possible way——

HEDDA (*raising her forefinger*). Not with money though!

BRACK. No, *that* would at once destroy the understanding. That is why, you see, I prefer those houses where there is no question of anything of that sort, and where I am free to come and go as a friend——

HEDDA. Of the mistress of the house?

BRACK (*bows gallantly*). Of the mistress first of all, of course. But of the master too, in the second place. Such a triangular friendship—if I may call it so—is really a great convenience for all parties, let me tell you.

TESMAN. I think it shows quite remarkable soundness of judgment. He never wrote like that before.— But haven't you been down into the garden and had a look round, Hedda? Eh?

HEDDA. No, I have only been out on the veranda a little.

TESMAN. Ah, isn't the view lovely? Over the fiord and the islands? (*Goes nearer to her.*) Well, isn't it nice to find yourself established as mistress of the house it had always been your dream to live in?

HEDDA. Yes, wasn't it a strange piece of luck?

TESMAN (*putting the books together*). Now I shall take all these into my study. I'm longing to——! And then I must change my clothes. (*To* BRACK.) I suppose we needn't start just yet?

BRACK. Oh, dear no—there is not the slightest hurry.

TESMAN. Well then, I can take my time. (*Is going with his books towards the inner room, but stops and turns*

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in the doorway.) By-the-bye, Hedda—I looked in on the aunts.

HEDDA (*by the door of the veranda*). Yes, I've no doubt you did.

TESMAN. Aunt Jane is not coming to-day.

HEDDA (*turns towards him*). Not coming? Is it that affair of the bonnet that keeps her away?

TESMAN. Oh, not at all. How could you think such a thing? But Aunt Rina is very ill now.

HEDDA. She always is.

TESMAN. Yes, but to-day she was much worse.

HEDDA. Oh, then it's only natural that her sister should remain with her. I must bear my disappointment.

TESMAN (*a little disappointed*). Of course this does not affect you so nearly. But I thought I would tell you, all the same.

(*He goes through the inner room and out to the right.*)

HEDDA (*goes over towards the stove*). Oh, those everlasting aunts!

BRACK. What bonnet were you talking about?

HEDDA. Oh, it was a little episode with Miss Rysing. She has such extraordinary manners at times. This morning she had pitched her bonnet down here in the drawing-room. (*Looks at him and smiles.*) And I pretended to think it was the servant's.

BRACK (*shaking his head in disapproval*). Now my dear Mrs. Hedda, how could you do such a thing? To that excellent old lady, too!

HEDDA (*moving nervously about*). Well, you see—these impulses come over me all of a sudden; and I *cannot* resist them. And then to suffer torments of remorse—there seems to be a kind of pleasure in it. A real—

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refinement of pleasure. Oh, I don't know how to explain it.

(*She has thrown herself into the easy-chair by the stove.*)

BRACK (*behind the easy-chair*). You are not really happy—that is at the bottom of it.

HEDDA (*looking before her*). I know of no reason why I should be—happy. Perhaps you can give me one?

BRACK. Well—amongst other things, because you have got exactly the home you had set your heart on.

HEDDA (*looks up at him and laughs*). Do you believe in that legend?

BRACK. Is there nothing in it, then?

HEDDA. Oh yes, there is *something* in it. I'll tell you the story.

BRACK. Well?

HEDDA. Some time ago, when there were evening parties at the Consul General's country house, Tesman used often to contrive to see me home——

BRACK. Yes, yes, he was very attentive. I remember that.

HEDDA. And you always had one of the younger ladies to look after.

BRACK. And then I had to go quite a different way—

Hedda. That's true. I know you were going a different way last summer.

BRACK (*laughing*). Oh fie, Mrs. Hedda! Well, then —Tesman——?

HEDDA. Well, it happened one evening. We were just passing here. And Tesman was writhing in the agony of having to find conversation, poor fellow. So I took pity on him——

BRACK (*smiles doubtfully*). *You* took pity?

HEDDA. Yes, I really did. And so—to help him out

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of his torment—I happened to say, in pure thoughtlessness, that I should like to live in this villa. And, thank heaven—that loosened his tongue.

BRACK. No more than that?

HEDDA. Not *that* evening.

BRACK. But afterwards?

HEDDA. Yes, my thoughtlessness had consequences, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Unfortunately that too often happens, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. Thanks! But all through the winter, whenever we met, he sat down and talked about this blessed villa. How nice it must be to live in Secretary Falk's villa.

BRACK. But then you contradicted him, of course? As you always do.

HEDDA. No, I said just the same as he. For Tesman is not one of the men that it is any pleasure to contradict.

BRACK. And you really cared not a rap about it all the time?

HEDDA. No, heaven knows I didn't.

BRACK. But now? Now that it has been made so homelike for you!

HEDDA. Uh, the rooms all seem to smell of lavender and dried rose-leaves.—But perhaps it's Aunt Jane that has brought that scent with her.

(GEORGE TESMAN, *dressed in black, with his gloves and hat in his hand, enters from the right through the inner room.*)

TESMAN. No answer from Lövborg, Hedda? Eh?

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HEDDA. No. I don't suppose he'll send any answer. He'll come himself.

TESMAN (*to* BRACK). Well then, I must wait for him as long as possible.

BRACK. We have plenty of time yet. None of my guests will arrive before seven or half-past.

TESMAN. Well then, that's all right.

(*He places his hat and gloves on a chair on the right.*)

HEDDA (*placing* BRACK'S *hat and overcoat on the same chair*). And at the worst Mr. Lövborg can remain here with me.

BRACK (*offering to take his things*). Oh, allow me.—What do you mean by "At the worst"?

HEDDA. That he won't go with you and Tesman.

TESMAN (*looks dubiously at her*). But, Hedda dear—do you think it would quite do? Remember, Auntie can't come.

HEDDA. No, but Mrs. Elfsted is coming. We three can have a cup of tea together.

BRACK. Yes, that would perhaps be the safest plan for him.

HEDDA (*rather sharply*). Why so?

BRACK. You were saying this morning that you knew what my bachelor parties were like.

(BERTA *appears at the hall door.*)

BERTA. There's a gentleman asking if you are at home, ma'am——

HEDDA. Well, show him in.

(BERTA *goes out.*)

TESMAN (*softly*). Hedda—you'll see, this is he.

(EILERT LÖVBORG *enters from the hall. He is slim and lean; of the same age as* TESMAN, *but looks older and somewhat worn out. His hair and beard are of a blackish brown, his face long, delicately*

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shaped and pale, but with spots of colour on the cheek-bones. He is dressed in a well-cut black visiting-suit, quite new, the frock-coat rather long. He has light brown gloves and a silk hat. He carries under his left arm a small portfolio with papers in it. He stops near the door and makes a slight bow, seeming somewhat embarrassed.)

TESMAN (*goes up to him and gives him his hand*). My dear Lövborg! Well, so we see each other again at last!

EILERT LÖVBORG (*speaks in a subdued voice*). Thanks for your letter, Tesman. (*Approaching* HEDDA.) May I shake hands with you too, Mrs. Tesman?

HEDDA (*giving him her hand*). I am glad to see you. (*Introducing him with a motion of her hand.*) I don't know whether you two gentlemen——?

LÖVBORG (*bowing slightly*). Judge Brack, I think.

BRACK (*bows*). Oh yes—we have often met.

TESMAN (*with his hand on* LÖVBORG'S *shoulder*). Well, now you must make yourself at home! (*Bringing him further forward.*) So I hear you are going to settle in town again.

LÖVBORG. Yes, I am.

TESMAN. Quite right, quite right. Let me tell you, I have got hold of your new book.

LÖVBORG (*indifferently*). Oh, *that* one.

TESMAN. But I haven't had time to read it yet.

LÖVBORG. Oh, my dear fellow, you may spare yourself the trouble.

TESMAN. Why so?

LÖVBORG. Why, because there is very little in it.

TESMAN. Very little in it!

BRACK. But, good gracious, it has been very much praised, I hear.

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LÖVBORG. Just so. That was what I wanted. What served my purpose. So I put nothing into the book but what every one would agree to.

BRACK. Very wise of you.

TESMAN. Well but, my dear——

LÖVBORG. I had to win myself a position again—to make an absolutely fresh start.

TESMAN (*a little embarrassed*). Yes, yes, I suppose you had to do that.

LÖVBORG (*smiling, lays down his hat, and taps the portfolio, which he holds out*). But look here—when *this* one appears—! For this—this is the real book. The one with something in it.

TESMAN. Indeed? And what is it?

LÖVBORG. It is the continuation.

TESMAN (*looks dubiously at him*). The continuation? Of what?

LÖVBORG. Of the book.

TESMAN. Of the new book——?

LÖVBORG. Yes, of course.

TESMAN. But, my dear fellow—does it not come down to our own days?

LÖVBORG. Certainly it does; and this one deals with the future.

TESMAN. But, my dear Lövborg—we know nothing of the future. And so there is nothing to be said about it.

LÖVBORG (*smiling*). Oh yes, perhaps there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same.

BRACK. But there can't possibly be anything—really scientific.

LÖVBORG. I don't trouble myself about that either. (*To* TESMAN, *showing him the papers*). Look here—you see. I have divided it into two sections. The first section deals with "The civilising forces of the future."

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And here is the second—(*running through the pages towards the end*)—here—forecasting the probable line of development.

TESMAN. How odd now. (*Shakes his head.*) I should never have thought of writing anything of that sort.

HEDDA (*at the glass door, drumming on the pane*). H'm! I dare say not.

LÖVBORG (*shutting up the portfolio*). I brought it with me, thinking I might read you a little of it this evening.

TESMAN. That was very good of you, Lövborg. But this evening—? (*Looking at* BRACK.) I don't quite see how we could manage it——

LÖVBORG. Well then, some other time. There is no hurry at all.

BRACK. I must tell you, Mr. Lövborg—there is a little gathering at my house this evening. In honour of Tesman, you understand. A few friends are coming.

LÖVBORG (*looking for his hat*). Oh—then I won't detain you——

TESMAN. No, no, there's time enough.

BRACK. No, but listen. Will you not do me the favour of joining us?

LÖVBORG (*with slight uneasiness*). I? No, no! Thank you very much.

BRACK. Oh, nonsense—do! We shall be quite a select little circle. And I assure you we shall have a "lively time," as Mrs. Hed—as Mrs. Tesman says.

LÖVBORG. Yes, I can believe that. But nevertheless——

BRACK. And then you might bring your manuscript with you, and read it to Tesman there. I could give you a room to yourselves.

TESMAN. Yes, why shouldn't you?

HEDDA (*interposing*). But, Tesman, if Mr. Lövborg

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would really rather not! I am sure Mr. Lövborg is much more inclined to remain here and have supper with me.

LÖVBORG (*with a rapid look at her*). With you, Mrs. Tesman!

HEDDA. And with Mrs. Elfsted——

LÖVBORG. Ah——!

HEDDA. —for she has promised to come this evening. So you see you are almost bound to remain, Mr. Lövborg, or she will have no one to see her home.

LÖVBORG. That's true. Many thanks, Mrs. Tesman —in that case I shall be very glad to remain.

HEDDA. Then I have one or two orders to give——

(*She goes to the hall door and rings.* BERTA *enters.* HEDDA *talks to her in a whisper, and points towards the inner room.* BERTA *nods and goes out again.*)

TESMAN (*at the same time, to* EILERT LÖVBORG). Tell me, Lövborg—is it this new subject—the future—that you are going to lecture about?

LÖVBORG. Yes.

TESMAN. I have heard that you are thinking of delivering a course of lectures this autumn.

LÖVBORG. That is my intention. I hope you won't take it ill, Tesman.

TESMAN. Take it ill! No, not in the least.

LÖVBORG. You see, I can quite understand that it must be disagreeable to you——

TESMAN. Oh, I can't expect you, out of consideration for me, to——

BRACK. And then it is not the first time in your lives that you two friends have met as rivals——

LÖVBORG (*looking rapidly at him*). Rivals?

HEDDA (*doing likewise*). How?

BRACK. In generous, friendly contest, of course.

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For prize medals and for scholarships and for—many other things.

TESMAN. Yes, in those days you carried off many a victory, my dear Lövborg.

LÖVBORG. Oh yes—at first. But latterly—. I have fallen a long way behind, Tesman.

HEDDA. But now you can catch him up again, Mr. Lövborg.

LÖVBORG. I hope to be able to.

TESMAN (*in suspense*). To win?

LÖVBORG. Yes. If not, I should not engage in a contest——

BRACK. Oh, when a man has such good backing as you have——

LÖVBORG. Backing? Aha—you refer to those relatives of mine, who run about and give themselves so much trouble——

BRACK. Ah, then you have heard of it at any rate?

LÖVBORG. Yes, I was told about it to-day. But I will have nothing to do with those people. I decline to see them!

TESMAN. But, my dear Lövborg——

HEDDA. Will you reject all help?

LÖVBORG. Yes, Mrs. Tesman, I will.

BRACK. But why in the world—! Why do you do that?

LÖVBORG. Because I wish to owe the victory to myself. To my own powers.

TESMAN. And—and do you think you will win?

LÖVBORG. Yes, I am sure of it.

TESMAN. And that—it will be you who—who will get the appointment?

LÖVBORG (*looks at him in astonishment*). Appointment?—Is it that professorship you are talking about?

TESMAN. Yes, of course.

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LÖVBORG. Is *that* what you think I am competing with you for?

TESMAN. But, bless my soul, what else should it be? If it isn't the appointment, why——

LÖVBORG. I wouldn't accept that appointment at any price. Such a position is not the thing for me. I have found that out while I was in the country.

BRACK. Then it is only the honour and glory you will compete for?

LÖVBORG (*softly, with diffidence*). Honour and glory mean much to a man with—well—with a past like mine.

TESMAN (*pressing his hands*). Yes, yes, Lövborg, I can quite understand. Thanks—now I recognise your old self. (*Joyfully, to* HEDDA.) Well, what do you say to that! Only the honour and glory! He is not going to stand in our way.

HEDDA (*curtly, looking at him*). *Our* way? Pray leave *me* out of the question.

(*She goes up towards the door of the inner room, where* BERTA *is placing a tray with decanters and glasses on the table.* HEDDA *nods approval, and comes forward again.* BERTA *goes out on the right of the inner room.*)

TESMAN (*at the same time*). And you, Judge—what do you say?

BRACK. Well, I say that honour and glory are fine things. And an old friendship—is an exceedingly lasting bond——

TESMAN. Yes, certainly it is; but all the same——

LÖVBORG. What I can't understand is that you could think so ill of me.

TESMAN. Yes, think of my being able to do that!

HEDDA (*looking at* TESMAN *and smiling*). You [stand there] look[-ing] as if you were thunderstruck.

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TESMAN. Yes, so I am——

BRACK. Don't you see, Mrs. Tesman, a thunderstorm has just passed over?

TESMAN. But tell me, Lövborg—what are you thinking of doing?

LÖVBORG. I am going to live as a free man.

BRACK. A pleasant occupation. But it doesn't bring in much.

LÖVBORG. I don't want much either. Not now.

TESMAN. No, and besides—when one is alone. With no one but one's self to look after. I should think you would get on quite well.

HEDDA (*pointing towards the inner room*). Will you not [go in and] take a glass of iced punch, gentlemen?

BRACK (*looking at his watch*). A stirrup-cup? Yes, it wouldn't come amiss.

TESMAN. A capital idea, Hedda! A capital idea! Now that the weight has been lifted——

HEDDA. Won't you go in? You too, Mr. Lövborg.

LÖVBORG (*with a gesture of refusal*). No, thank you. Nothing for me!

TESMAN. Oh yes, do! Come and join us.

LÖVBORG. No, no, many thanks. Nothing at all.

BRACK. Why bless me—iced punch is surely not poison.

LÖVBORG. No, perhaps not for every one.

HEDDA. I will keep Mr. Lövborg company in the meantime.

TESMAN. Yes, yes, Hedda dear—do.

(*He and* BRACK *go into the inner room, seat themselves at the table, drink punch, smoke cigars, and chat during what follows.* EILERT LÖVBORG *remains standing beside the stove.* HEDDA *goes to the writing-table.*)

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HEDDA (*turns her head and says in a rather loud voice*:) Now I will show you some photographs, Mr. Lövborg. You know Tesman and I made a tour in the Tyrol on our way home?

(*She brings an album, and places it on the table beside the sofa, in the further corner of which she seats herself.* LÖVBORG *approaches, stops, and looks at her. Then he takes a chair and seats himself to her left, with his back towards the inner room.*)

HEDDA (*opening the album*). Do you see this range of mountains? It's the Ortler group. Tesman has written the name underneath. Here it is: "The Ortler group near Meran."

LÖVBORG (*who has never taken his eyes off her, says softly and slowly*:) Hedda—Gabler!

HEDDA (*glances hastily at him, and says softly*:) Ah! —Hush!

LÖVBORG (*repeats softly, in a pained voice*:) Hedda Gabler!

HEDDA (*looking at the album*). That was my name in the old days—when we knew each other.

LÖVBORG. And now—as long as I live—I must teach myself to say Mrs.—Tesman——

HEDDA (*still turning over the pages*). Yes. And I think you ought to practise in time. The sooner the better, I should say.

LÖVBORG. Married. Married to another——!

HEDDA. Yes—so the world goes.

LÖVBORG. Oh, Hedda—Hedda—how could you do it!

HEDDA (*looks sharply at him*). What! I can't allow this!

LÖVBORG. What?

(TESMAN *comes from the inner room and goes towards the sofa.*)

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HEDDA (*calmly, in her usual voice*). And this, Mr. Lövborg—is a view from the Val d'Ampezzo. Look at these peaks. (*Looks up at* TESMAN.) What's the name of these curious peaks?

TESMAN (*looking more closely*). Those? Oh, those are the Dolomites.

HEDDA. Yes, that's it.—Those are the Dolomites, Mr. Lövborg.

TESMAN (*to* HEDDA). I only wanted to ask whether I shouldn't bring you a little punch? Or wine, perhaps? For yourself at any rate.

HEDDA. Yes, please. And a few biscuits.

TESMAN. No cigarettes?

HEDDA. No [, many thanks].

TESMAN. Very well.

(*He goes into the inner room and out to the right.* BRACK *sits in the inner room, and keeps an eye from time to time on* HEDDA *and* LÖVBORG. *Soon after,* TESMAN *again appears and seats himself at the table with* BRACK.)

LÖVBORG (*softly, as before*). Answer me, Hedda—how could you go and do this?

HEDDA (*apparently absorbed in the album*). If you say *du* to me I won't talk to you.

LÖVBORG. May I not say *du* even when we are alone?

HEDDA. No. You may *think* it; but you mustn't *say* it.

LÖVBORG. Why not—exactly?

HEDDA. Because I should look upon it as a sort of unfaithfulness towards Tesman. And I won't hear of that.

LÖVBORG. Is it really possible that such a trifle offends your love for him?

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HEDDA (*glances at him and smiles*). Love? What an idea!

LÖVBORG. I don't understand you, Hedda.

HEDDA. Do you believe that anything so wonderful exists?

LÖVBORG. As love?

HEDDA. Yes. For *I* don't. I believe it's only something that people have invented. And that they go about discussing.

(*In the meantime* BERTA *has entered from the right in the inner room, bringing a smaller tray with punch, wine and biscuits, which she places on the table of the inner room, going out again on the same side.* TESMAN *takes up the tray and brings it into the drawing-room.*)

TESMAN. Here you are! Isn't this tempting?

HEDDA. Why do you bring it yourself?

TESMAN (*filling the glasses*). Because I think it's fun to wait upon you, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you have poured out two glasses. Mr. Lövborg said he wouldn't have any——

TESMAN. Mrs. Elfsted will soon be here, won't she?

HEDDA. Yes, by-the-bye—Mrs. Elfsted——!

TESMAN. Had you forgotten her?

HEDDA. Oh, we were so absorbed in these photographs.—Tesman—what is the name of this little village?

TESMAN (*goes round to her*). Which? Let me see.—Oh, that's Gossensass, by the Brenner Pass. It was there we stayed *more* than a day——

HEDDA. Yes, and met that lively party.

TESMAN. Yes, of course it was *there*.

(*He returns to the inner room and sits beside* BRACK.)

LÖVBORG. Not in *our* friendship either?

HEDDA. What?

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LÖVBORG. Was there no love in it? Not a single spark—not a tinge of love in the whole of it?

HEDDA. I wonder?

LÖVBORG. None at all on your side then?

HEDDA. To me it seems as though we were two good comrades—two intimate friends. You especially were frankness itself.

LÖVBORG. I fear I was too frank. But it was you that made me so. Oh, Hedda—why should not that, at any rate, have continued, as it was then!

HEDDA. The fault was yours that it could not. Yours—and that of the life you were leading.

LÖVBORG. Yes, I know. I know that well enough.

HEDDA (*looking at him*). I think there was something beautiful—something almost fascinating—in—in that secret intimacy which no living creature so much as dreamed of.

LÖVBORG. Yes, yes, Hedda! Was there not? (*Pauses for a moment and looks before him.*) When I used to come to your father's in the afternoon—and the General sat over at the window reading his papers—with his back towards us——

HEDDA. And you and I on the corner sofa——

LÖVBORG. With the illustrated magazines, Hedda——

HEDDA. Just as we are now with this album.

LÖVBORG. Yes, and when I made my confessions to you—told you about myself, things that at that time no one else knew. Told you of my escapades—my days and nights of devilment.—Oh, Hedda—what was the power in you that drove me to confess these things?

HEDDA (*starts, and looks at him*). Do you think it was any power in me?

LÖVBORG. How else can I explain it? And all those —roundabout questions—you used to put to me——

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HEDDA. Which you understood so particularly well——

LÖVBORG. But how could you sit and question me like that? Question me about—all that sort of thing?

HEDDA. And how could you answer, Mr. Lövborg——?

LÖVBORG. Well, a man—. But tell me now, Hedda—was there not love at the bottom of this? On your side? Was it not all because you felt as though you might purge my stains away—if I made you my confessor? Was it not so?

HEDDA. No, not quite.

LÖVBORG. But what was your motive, then?

HEDDA (*with slight hesitation*). Do you think it so strange that a lady—when it can be done—without any one knowing——

LÖVBORG. Well?

HEDDA. —should be glad to have a peep, now and then, into a world which——

LÖVBORG. Which?

HEDDA. —which she is forbidden to know anything about? [To me you were like a messenger from a forbidden country.]

LÖVBORG (*looking at her*). So that was it?

HEDDA. Partly. Partly—I almost think.

LÖVBORG. But why could not things go on between us? As they were then? Why did you break it all off so suddenly?

HEDDA. Do you need to be told that?

LÖVBORG. Certainly. Tell me!

HEDDA. Have you forgotten your abominable behaviour—on a certain occasion? The last time we were alone.

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LÖVBORG. Oh, don't remind me of that! But I have an impression that it was not *that* which caused the rupture.

HEDDA. No, not exactly. But from such a person as you were then, I might expect—I was going to say—anything.

LÖVBORG. Oh, you certainly had no need to fear a repetition.

HEDDA. The worst of it was that the whole town got to know what kind of a life you were leading. What kind of company you had got into.

LÖVBORG. I don't think, though, that I took any pains to conceal it. I did it in defiance!

HEDDA. And that is why all the best houses were closed to you.

LÖVBORG. Yes, the others. But that *you*—you, Hedda——!

HEDDA. Of course we had to do as the others.

LÖVBORG. Yes, but—*that* is precisely what I had never imagined.

HEDDA. Well—fortunately you soon consoled yourself in the country.

LÖVBORG. Not so soon as you think.

HEDDA. No?

LÖVBORG. But as I never heard any more from you—never had a word in answer to my letters——

HEDDA. It is imprudent to put things in writing. And besides—I ended by giving you a sufficiently plain answer—in deeds.

LÖVBORG. Yes, you went and married another. When I heard *that*, it was quite natural that I should try to console myself, as you call it.

HEDDA. I'm sure I quite agree.

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LÖVBORG. But, by-the-bye, how do you know all this? Mrs. Elfsted must have told you something.

HEDDA. Mrs. Elfsted has told me—most of it—Ought she not to have done so?

LÖVBORG. Yes, to you, Hedda—with all my heart.

HEDDA. But—now that—happily—you are on your feet again—. Do you know what I think so very strange in you?

LÖVBORG. Well?

HEDDA. That you should sit here lamenting over an old story like this. Over something which *now*, I should think, must be—what shall I call it?—a sort of exercise of your memory.

LÖVBORG. Then do you too labour under the prejudice that a man can only feel love for one woman—at a time?

HEDDA (*looking before her for a moment*). Well—perhaps you're right in—(*half turned towards him*). What is one really to believe—if that be so?

LÖVBORG. Oh, I entirely forgot that you don't believe there is such a thing as love.

HEDDA (*turning over the pages of the album*). You mustn't take everything I say so literally, either.

LÖVBORG (*looks at her a moment, and whispers passionately*). Oh, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I begin to see a hidden meaning beneath all you have been saying.

HEDDA (*softly, with a glance*). Take care! Believe nothing of the sort!

(*The hall door is opened from without by* BERTA.)

HEDDA (*closes the album with a bang and calls smilingly*). Ah, at last! My darling Thea—come along!

(MRS. ELFSTED *enters, without her cloak. She is in evening dress. The door is closed behind her.*)

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HEDDA (*on the sofa, stretches out her arms towards her*). Oh, Thea—you can't think how I have been longing for you all this time!

(MRS. ELFSTED *goes up to the table and gives* HEDDA *her hand.* LÖVBORG *has risen from his chair. He and* MRS. ELFSTED *greet each other with a silent nod.*)

MRS. ELFSTED (*who remains standing*). Ought I not to say good evening to your husband too?

HEDDA. Oh, leave those two where they are. They are going soon.

MRS. ELFSTED. Are they going out?

HEDDA. Yes, to a bachelor party.

MRS. ELFSTED (*involuntarily*). Not *you*, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖVBORG. No.

HEDDA. No, Mr. Lövborg remains with you and me.

MRS. ELFSTED (*takes a chair and is about to seat herself*). Ah, how nice it is here!

HEDDA. No, thank you. Not *there!* You'll be good enough to come over here to me. I will sit between you.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, just as you please.

(*She goes round the table and seats herself on the sofa on* HEDDA'S *right.* LÖVBORG *also seats himself.*)

LÖVBORG (*after a short pause, to* HEDDA). Is not she lovely to look at?

HEDDA. Only to look at?

MRS. ELFSTED (*anxiously to* HEDDA). Oh, but does he know——?

HEDDA. Of course he knows——

LÖVBORG. You were quite right to tell Hedda everything.

MRS. ELFSTED. Thank heaven! I was so afraid you would not like it.

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HEDDA. You afraid! When you have such power over him?

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, I have no power in reality. If we share our thoughts and opinions, it is purely voluntary on both sides.

LÖVBORG (*to* HEDDA). Yes. *We* two—she and I—we are two good comrades. Frank, trusty comrades. A man and a woman who have absolute faith in each other—though our fellowship is one of perfect freedom. And then she is so brave, Hedda!

MRS. ELFSTED. Good heavens—am I brave?

LÖVBORG. Perhaps not in other ways. But exceedingly, where your comrade is concerned.

HEDDA. Ah, courage—courage. If one only had that.

MRS. ELFSTED. There was nothing so very courageous in coming away when——

LÖVBORG. Oh yes, dear friend, it takes a good deal of courage to leave one's husband. To leave house and home. And all to throw in one's lot freely with another.

HEDDA. Yes, I certainly think so too, Thea. (*Lightly stroking her hair.*) I can't imagine—no, I don't understand how you could do it. How you could dare actually to set about it.

MRS. ELFSTED. But there was nothing else to be done. I could not possibly stay up there alone—with—with——

HEDDA. —with the other?

MRS. ELFSTED (*hides her face in her hands and leans her head on* HEDDA'S *shoulder*). Oh, Hedda—Hedda!

HEDDA. And then the worst part of it all! It will be impossible to keep this a secret for long.

LÖVBORG. That she has left her home, yes. That will soon be common property. But no one except you will know that she did it to be with me.

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MRS. ELFSTED (*to* HEDDA). No, that must not come out for the world! You won't say anything to Tesman, will you?

HEDDA. Not to any living soul, Thea dear.

LÖVBORG. For I have to make a fresh start. And a man with a past like *mine*—. H'm! One knows pretty well how people would interpret such a connection. She too would be dragged in the mire.

HEDDA (*looking before her*). Yes, if only we could be free of—of what people think——

(*There is a general leave-taking.* JUDGE BRACK, LÖVBORG *and* TESMAN *go out by the hall door. At the same time,* BERTA *brings in two lamps through the inner room, places them on the tables in the drawing-room, and goes out again through the inner room.*)

MRS. ELFSTED. Hedda—Hedda—what will come of all this?

HEDDA. We shall see about ten o'clock.

MRS. ELFSTED (*rises and crosses the room*). I only hope we may. But you don't know him so well as I do.

HEDDA. Can he be so pitiful as that! With such a thirst, such a devouring thirst for all that he calls the joys of life, and then—not daring to take even a sip of them!

MRS. ELFSTED. Ah yes, Hedda, unhappily it is true.

HEDDA (*rising*). It is not true! You may doubt him as long as you please. I believe in him! Now we will try——

MRS. ELFSTED. You have some hidden motive in this, Hedda!

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HEDDA. Yes, I have. I want for once in my life to have power over a human mind.

MRS. ELFSTED. Have you not the power?

HEDDA. I have not and have never had it.

MRS. ELFSTED. Not your husband's?

HEDDA. His! Do you think that is worth the trouble? Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am.

(*Clasps her passionately in her arms.*)

MRS. ELFSTED. Let me go! Let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda!

BERTA (*from the inner room*). Tea is laid in the dining-room, ma'am. (*Goes out again.*)

HEDDA. Very well! Come along to tea, you little—you lucky little stupid!

(*She drags* MRS. ELFSTED *almost by force towards the door at the back.*)

FROM THE THIRD ACT

HEDDA (*goes towards her*). There there there! There's nothing to be so alarmed about. I know quite well what has happened.

MRS. ELFSTED. Well, what do you think? Won't you tell me?

HEDDA. Why—of course it has been a pretty late affair at Judge Brack's. These bachelors generally make things rather lively.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, yes, yes—that is clear enough!

HEDDA. And Tesman hasn't cared to come home and ring us up in the middle of the night. He didn't want to disturb me. (*Laughing.*) Perhaps he wasn't inclined to show himself either—immediately after a jovial party.

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MRS. ELFSTED. But in that case—where can he have gone?

HEDDA. Of course he has gone to those blessed Aunts' and slept there. They have his old room ready for him.

MRS. ELFSTED. No, he can't be with *them;* for a letter has just come for him from Miss Rysing. There it lies.

HEDDA. Indeed? (*Looks at the address.*) Why yes, it's addressed in Aunt Jane's own hand. Well then—he is staying behind at Judge Brack's—he too.

MRS. ELFSTED. He too? Do you mean that Lövborg——?

HEDDA. Yes, Lövborg is certainly there still. Otherwise he would have come to fetch you.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh Hedda, you are just saying things you don't believe a bit.

HEDDA. Well, bless me—even if it's as bad as you think? What of it? Once doesn't count.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, that's just what does not apply here. Here least of all!

TESMAN (*sits down heavily to the left of the table*). Enjoyed myself? Oh, Hedda—I'm afraid it will take me a long time to get over to-night.

HEDDA. You! But you are always moderate——

TESMAN. Yes, of course. I didn't mean *that*——

HEDDA (*in suspense*). What became of Eilert Lövborg? Why didn't he come back?

TESMAN. Well, you see, Hedda, that is just it. And I can't get rid of the distressing thought that it was all my fault.

HEDDA. But what was your fault?

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TESMAN. I must tell you the whole story.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, do.

(*She seats herself on the other side of the table.*)

TESMAN. It began well enough. Nobody chaffed him. And nobody tempted him either. He and I were able to sit by ourselves in one of the side rooms. And then he read to me. Long extracts from the new book that is coming out.

HEDDA. Well?

TESMAN. You can't imagine what a book that is going to be, Hedda! So grand both in design and execution——

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I don't care about that. And it has nothing to do with the story either.

TESMAN. Yes, it has. It is the very kernel of it, you see.

HEDDA. How?

TESMAN. As I sat listening to him—. It seemed as if a rustling flight of ideas were darting over my head. I felt myself filled with a wealth of intuition, which I only half understood.

HEDDA. Could you not understand it?

TESMAN. Not altogether, I say. And then came that gnawing thought, that has haunted me and that I have thrust away from me—ever since our school-days.

HEDDA. What thought?

TESMAN. That Eilert Lövborg is really my superior.

HEDDA. But what if he is? He has no intention of competing with you for the appointment.

TESMAN. Every one who reads his new book will say that he was the right man. And therefore I could not resist it. Oh, Hedda, what evil may lie hid in a man!

HEDDA. Tell me more about this!

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TESMAN. Then some more lively companions joined us. They had been to a big dinner-party. Came straight from table.

HEDDA. And then it began?

TESMAN. Yes, then came the orgie. I saw it was coming. And I saw too that it seemed to carry Eilert Lövborg away.

HEDDA. Could he not resist?

TESMAN. Neither could nor would. I saw what it would lead to. And—just think—I did nothing to save him.

HEDDA. Oh, I suppose there was nothing to be done.

TESMAN. Yes, I might have tried to get him home with me. Might have reminded him of his promise to Mrs. Elfsted.

HEDDA. Oh yes. Do you think *that* would have been any use?

TESMAN. Yes, I think so. For *she* has a power over him that nobody else has.

HEDDA. How do you know that?

TESMAN. I could understand that from all he said.

HEDDA. What did he say!

TESMAN. That the whole of his new work came to him as an inspiration from her.

HEDDA. And in spite of that—he wallowed in these orgies——

TESMAN. Deeper than you have any idea of.

HEDDA. What became of him?

TESMAN. He went off with a lot of the others. But where they went I don't know. Both Brack and I went to his rooms and rang. But he hadn't come home.

HEDDA. That was to be expected. And you don't know any more?

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TESMAN. No. Brack and I separated, so as to inquire in different directions. But they knew nothing about him, where I went. He must have gone by himself——

HEDDA. And Brack——?

TESMAN. I haven't seen him since. Oh, that unhappy fellow—! Now he is down again. And then after all—Hedda—to think that——

HEDDA. What? What do you mean?

TESMAN. That I let him go. That I could sit there secretly wishing that he would go and ruin himself for ever.—Am I better than he? In my inmost heart! If this is the end of him, that question will never leave me any peace.

HEDDA. I don't think there's any use in brooding over things of that sort.

TESMAN. But his conduct last night cannot possibly have been more than a passing aberration. There was such profound sincerity in the way he spoke of her.

HEDDA. Was there?

TESMAN. I don't understand him. Can't conceive how it is with him.

HEDDA. Let him fall, Tesman. He is irretrievable after all.

TESMAN. Oh, don't let us think that.—I was able to do him *one* service.

HEDDA. Last night?

TESMAN. Yes. (*Taking* LÖVBORG'S *portfolio out of his coat pocket.*) I rescued this for him.

HEDDA. His new book!

TESMAN. Yes; as we were leaving. He and some of the others were a little way in front. I heard him shouting and making a noise. And as I was hurrying after

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them to try to quiet him, I found the portfolio lying by the wayside. He had lost it.

HEDDA. Let me see it.

TESMAN (*handing her the portfolio*). Here it is. Just think if that had been lost. And it might have been so easily.

HEDDA (*turning over the papers*). This is not Lövborg's handwriting.

TESMAN. Mrs. Elfsted wrote parts of it for him. From loose notes, he said.

HEDDA. So that is how they sat working together. (*Shuts her eyes.*) I seem to be able to see them.

TESMAN. You too might work with me in the same way, Hedda. Might help me—if you cared to.

HEDDA. You!—(*Looking at him and tapping the portfolio with her finger.*) Well, Tesman—what are you going to do with this?

TESMAN. Do with it, dear? Give it him back, of course.

HEDDA. Yes, yes, I suppose that is what you will do.

TESMAN. But he shall have a good fright first. Put it away in the writing-table drawer. And say nothing.

HEDDA. You said nothing to him about having found it?

TESMAN. No, of course not. In the unmanageable state he was in.

HEDDA. Did any of the others see you find it?

TESMAN. No, none of them.

HEDDA. And you didn't tell any of them afterwards either?

TESMAN. No, I wouldn't do that for his sake.

HEDDA. So no one knows what has become of it?

TESMAN. No. And he shall wait a little while before he is told.

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HEDDA (*goes to the writing-table and places the portfolio underneath some books*). There. He shall never get this back.

TESMAN (*springing up*). But, Hedda—what are you thinking of! What do you mean!

HEDDA. This must be got rid of. [Were you not thinking of getting rid of this?]

TESMAN. What has come over you?

HEDDA. Do you think he would be able to write it over again?

TESMAN. Impossible. The inspiration would be lacking the second time.

HEDDA. Take it and burn it. Then it will be done with.

TESMAN. But you must be mad.

HEDDA. You must do it. I must see whether I have any power over you.

TESMAN. Oh, you know quite well you have.

HEDDA. Not altogether. I know I have over him.

TESMAN. Over him!

HEDDA. It was I who made him go to Judge Brack's drinking-party.

TESMAN. Oh, Hedda, but how could you do that!

HEDDA. It came over me with such force. So irresistibly. I had to see whether I could tempt him to his fall.

TESMAN. And it turned out that you could.

HEDDA. Yes. But this must be the end of it. He must go away from here.

TESMAN. Away! For your sake!

HEDDA. Yes. If not, I can't answer for anything.

TESMAN. Hedda!

HEDDA. Not on any pretext must he be allowed to come here!

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TESMAN. Oh, I see what it is. You have never really been able to forget him altogether!

HEDDA. I don't know myself. Only get him out of the way. I will not have my thoughts fixed on anything but—what is coming.

TESMAN. What is coming!

HEDDA. Yes.

TESMAN. Oh, Heddà—if I understand you aright.

HEDDA. Yes, you do.

TESMAN. Oh, Hedda, Hedda! And Aunt Jane! Think how happy Aunt Jane will be.

HEDDA. Ugh, don't be so ridiculous!

TESMAN. Ridiculous?

HEDDA. Yes, isn't it ridiculous and absurd that the first thing you do is to cry out for—Aunt Jane?—By-the-bye, there is a letter from her here.

TESMAN. For me?

HEDDA. Yes. (*Handing it to him.*) It came early this morning.

TESMAN (*opening it*). What can it be?

HEDDA. Perhaps she has heard something about him.

TESMAN (*runs his eye through it*). Oh, Hedda—she says that Aunt Rina is dying.

HEDDA. Well, we were prepared for that.

TESMAN. She says that if I want to see her again, I must make haste. I'll run in to them at once.

HEDDA (*suppressing a smile*). Run!

TESMAN (*takes his hat and throws his overcoat over his arm*). I do hope I mayn't come too late.

HEDDA. Oh, if you run——

(BERTA *appears at the hall door.*)

BERTA. Judge Brack is here, and wishes to know if he may come in.

TESMAN. Judge Brack! No, I can't possibly see him.

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HEDDA. But I can. (*To* BERTA.) Ask Judge Brack to come in.

(BERTA *opens the door to* JUDGE BRACK, *and goes out herself.*)

BRACK. Oh, are you starting again to hunt for him—the bird of ill omen?

TESMAN. No, I must rush off to my aunts'. The invalid one is lying at death's door.

BRACK. Dear me, is she indeed?

TESMAN. And did you find any trace of him?

BRACK. No. And you?

TESMAN. I didn't either.

BRACK. I didn't think you would. But don't let me detain you. At such a critical moment——

TESMAN. Yes, I must really hurry—Good-bye! Good-bye! (*He goes out by the hall door.*)

HEDDA. Well, you seem to have had quite a lively night.

BRACK. I have not had my clothes off a moment, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. And yet you have heard nothing.

BRACK. Oh yes, I have. Practically everything.

HEDDA. But you said——

BRACK. Tesman was on tenterhooks to get away, you see.

HEDDA. Yes, aren't you sorry for poor Tesman? Just think, Aunt Rina—! Well, where did you get hold of Lövborg?

BRACK. I didn't get hold of him at all. But I heard that he was being well taken care of.

HEDDA. Where?

BRACK. At the police station.

HEDDA. Ah—but what has he done?

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BRACK. H'm—I think we had better not go into details.

HEDDA. Oh yes. Details above all. They are what I want to hear about.

BRACK. Well, you must really excuse me all the same, Mrs. Hedda. I was not present, you know.

HEDDA. You! No, I know that.

BRACK. I have only heard that he fell in with a lot of other revellers.

HEDDA. Not any of yours?

BRACK. Of mine?

HEDDA. Yes, of your guests then.

BRACK. Oh, can you think that! No, they always behave themselves out-of-doors. They go home to bed like good boys.

HEDDA. Yes, yes. We well-behaved people——

BRACK. No, unfortunately it was some of his old acquaintances he came across.

HEDDA. Well, and then?

BRACK. Then the usual thing happened. They paid a visit to some—singing girls, I think.

HEDDA. Or something of the sort, yes. And afterwards?

BRACK. An orgie, presumably. Followed by the customary free fight with resultant ejection. Then a street row outside. Windows smashed. Police called. And so to the lock-up.

HEDDA. It must be curious to be present at such a scene.

BRACK. Would you like to be, Mrs. Hedda?

HEDDA. Oh yes, once in a way. If nobody saw one. And nobody heard anything of it afterwards.

BRACK. No, I should think not.

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HEDDA. For there must be something untameable among all this coarseness and vulgarity—. But this is a thing that I keep for your ears alone, my dear Judge.

BRACK. I should certainly advise you to do so. But what annoys me beyond measure is that this person could be so inconsiderate as to go straight from my party and——

HEDDA. Do you think it will get about that he came from your house?

BRACK. Yes, of course it will come out at the police-court.

HEDDA. Will the matter come into court!

BRACK. Yes—when the police get hold of an affair—. But I had a suspicion that something of this sort was coming. And therefore, Mrs. Hedda, I will give you a friendly piece of advice. After this. you must not allow this person into your house.

HEDDA. What do you say!

BRACK. Yes, and there is another person that you ought not to receive either.

HEDDA. I can see that you mean Mrs. Elfsted.

BRACK. Of course. Those two have been plotting together.

HEDDA. Do you know anything definite!

BRACK. No, but it is not difficult to guess a thing of that sort. She, a woman who as a rule never sets foot in town, arrives here simultaneously with him. It was all arranged between them, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. What do you mean?

BRACK. Their meeting here in your house.

HEDDA. I don't believe it. You are mistaken.

BRACK. Well, wait and see which of us is right. I don't believe she will go home just at present.

HEDDA. No, that she will not do.

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BRACK. There, you see. Yes, of course I am right. You are to serve as a blind.

HEDDA. A blind!

BRACK. Now, of course, he will try to win you over. Just watch whether he doesn't strike the melancholy note. Whether he doesn't begin talking of bygone days. Of disappointed hopes——

HEDDA. —of what might have been so beautiful—but was not to be. Ah yes, one has heard all that.

BRACK. Perhaps that was the line that was taken yesterday, when you were sitting here with the album?

HEDDA. But now you are getting altogether too suspicious, my dear Judge.

BRACK. Well, I confess I am on my guard against that gentleman. It would be terrible to me to think that an intruder was coming into——

HEDDA. —into the triangle.

BRACK. Yes, precisely. Don't laugh at it. It would simply mean that I should find myself homeless.

HEDDA. Oh, come, I am sure you have plenty of other comfortable homes about town.

BRACK. No, unfortunately. Not now. In the last six months I have lost no fewer than three. And those among the best.

HEDDA. Oh—did intruding cocks come into those baskets too?

BRACK. No, but other intruders arrived——

HEDDA. Of what kind?

BRACK. Children.

HEDDA. Indeed? But what have those children to do with you?

BRACK (*laughing*). They have nothing at all to do with me. That is why I call them intruders.

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HEDDA. Then I don't at all see——

BRACK. But, bless me, you must know that I can't endure children——

HEDDA. And why not?

BRACK. Because the little angels occupy the whole attention of the mistress of the house. Old friends are nothing to her when an event of that kind takes place.

HEDDA. Egoist!

BRACK. Happily no such danger is threatened here. (*Laughing.*) Although—I won't deny that—it would be worth anything——

HEDDA. Worth anything? What?

BRACK. To see—a certain specialist in his new dignity.

HEDDA. Do you think *that* would make him so supremely ridiculous?

BRACK. Well, you mustn't be offended, Mrs. Hedda—but I can't deny——

HEDDA. I won't listen to you any more, Judge——

BRACK. Ah—indeed! Well, put that gentleman out of your thoughts; for I assure you he doesn't care a scrap for you.

HEDDA. Only for her, you mean.

BRACK. For his fellow-worker, yes. (*Looking at his watch.*) But now I must be getting back. Good-bye, Mrs. Hedda. (*He goes towards the glass door.*)

HEDDA. Are you going through the garden?

BRACK. Yes, it's a short cut for me.

HEDDA. And then it is a back way, too.

BRACK. Quite so. I have no objection to back ways. At times. They may be piquant enough.

HEDDA. When there is ball practice going on, you mean.

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BRACK (*in the doorway*). Oh, people don't shoot their own poultry, you know. And the stork—is inviolate——

HEDDA. —and is not to be found in these parts.

BRACK. No, no, that's true.

(*He bows, and goes out by the glass door.*)

HEDDA. You and she!

LÖVBORG. You can be of no more service to me, Thea!

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, how can you speak so! No more service to you! Am I not to help you? Now, most of all! Are we not to work together?

LÖVBORG. It is all over. I shall never do any more work. Least of all with you.

MRS. ELFSTED. But what can have come between us!

LÖVBORG. Let that be as it may. But the comradeship between us is now at an end.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, but this is so utterly inconceivable. What am I to do with my life?

LÖVBORG. You must try to live your life as if you had never known me.

MRS. ELFSTED. But you know I cannot do that! How can you think it possible!

LÖVBORG. Try if you cannot, Thea. You must go home again——

MRS. ELFSTED (*with a shriek*). Ah—you can say that! Go home again! Leave you!

LÖVBORG. It will be best for you. And besides—there is nothing else to be done.

MRS. ELFSTED. Never in this world will I go back there. Where you are, there will I be also. And what would happen to you then?

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LÖVBORG. I think you can see what will happen to me.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, but I must be able to give you some support. I could before. Up there.

LÖVBORG. For a time, yes. But it wanted nothing but a stormy night to blow all that we had built up into fragments.

MRS. ELFSTED. Well, that cannot be helped.—But I will not let myself be driven away like this. You have no right to do it.

LÖVBORG. No, I know that.

MRS. ELFSTED. Well, and therefore I will not put up with it! I will not submit to it on any account! Do you hear, Lövborg! I tell you that. I will remain here. I will be with you when the book appears.

HEDDA. Ah, the book——!

LÖVBORG. My book and Thea's, Mrs. Tesman; for that is what it is.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, that is what it is. You have said that so often. And in my inmost self I feel that it is true. I have my share in its existence.

LÖVBORG. You have.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, and that is why I have a right to be present when it appears. I must see with my own eyes how respect and honour are showered upon you. Now more than ever, Lövborg. And the happiness—the happiness—oh, I must share it with you!

LÖVBORG. Thea—our book will never appear.

HEDDA. Ah——!

MRS. ELFSTED. Never appear!

LÖVBORG. *Can* never appear.

MRS. ELFSTED. Lövborg—what have you done with the manuscript?

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HEDDA (*breathlessly*). The manuscript——!

MRS. ELFSTED. Where is it?

LÖVBORG. Oh Thea—don't ask me about it!

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, yes, I *will* know. I demand to be told at once.

LÖVBORG. The manuscript—. Well then—I have torn the manuscript into a thousand pieces.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh no, no——!

HEDDA (*involuntarily*). But that's not true!

LÖVBORG (*looks at her*). Not true——!

HEDDA (*collecting herself*). Oh well, of course. But it sounded so incredible——

LÖVBORG. It is true, all the same, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELFSTED. Just think, Hedda—torn his own work to pieces.

LÖVBORG. Tore it into a thousand pieces—and scattered them on the fiord—far out. There there is cool sea-water at any rate—let them drift upon it—drift with the current and the wind. And then presently they will sink—deeper and deeper—as I shall, Thea.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, Lövborg, Lövborg—this is terrible to think of.

LÖVBORG. Yes. Therefore you must go away in time.

MRS. ELFSTED (*without listening to him*). Do you know, Lövborg, that to my dying day I shall think of what you have done now as though you had killed a little child.

LÖVBORG. Yes, you are right, Thea. It is a sort of child-murder.

MRS. ELFSTED. How could you then—! Did it not belong to me too?

HEDDA. Ah——.

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LÖVBORG. That is why I would rather part from you now. After this, you understand.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, oh yes, I can understand. But it seems impossible that we *can* part nevertheless! Well well, now I will go, Hedda.

HEDDA. But you are not going away from town?

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, I don't know. I see nothing but darkness before me.

(*She goes out by the hall door.*)

HEDDA. So you are not going to see her home, Mr. Lövborg?

LÖVBORG. I? Through the streets? In broad daylight?

HEDDA. No, no—. Though, after all—! Is it then so utterly irretrievable—this that happened last night?

LÖVBORG. It will not end with last night—I know that perfectly well—it is all over with me now.

HEDDA. But *can* you never learn to control yourself?

LÖVBORG. No—that is just what I cannot do. And that is the desperate part of it. It is not with me as with so many others. They have it in their power to pull themselves up, when they find it running away with them. I shall never be able to learn that. I have brought myself down to be a bondman. Lost the power over my own will.

HEDDA. Yes, yes. But how could you treat poor Thea so heartlessly?

LÖVBORG. Oh, don't say that it was heartless!

HEDDA. To go and destroy what has filled her whole soul day and night—for months and years. You do not call that heartless!

LÖVBORG. To you I can tell it, Hedda——

HEDDA. What can you tell?

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LÖVBORG. First promise me—give me your word—that what I now confide to you neither she nor any one else shall ever know.

LÖVBORG. Beautifully?

HEDDA. For once in a way. Good-bye, you must go now. And do not come here any more.

LÖVBORG. Good-bye, Mrs. Tesman. And give George Tesman my love.

HEDDA. No, wait. I must give you a memento to take with you.

(*She goes to the writing-table, opens the drawer and returns to* LÖVBORG *with one of the pistols.*)

LÖVBORG. This? Is this the memento?

HEDDA. Do you remember—you asked me for it once before.

LÖVBORG. You would not give it me then.

HEDDA. Take it. Now it is yours.

LÖVBORG (*puts the pistol in his breast pocket*). Thanks.

HEDDA. And beautifully—promise me that.

LÖVBORG. Good-bye—Hedda Gabler.

(*He goes out by the hall door.*)

(HEDDA *listens for a moment. Then she goes up to the writing-table, takes out* LÖVBORG'S *manuscript, goes with it and seats herself in the armchair beside the stove, opens the packet and sorts the blue and white quires separately, lays the white quires in the wrapper again and keeps the blue ones in her lap.*)

HEDDA (*opens the stove door; presently she throws one of the blue quires into the fire and whispers to herself*). Now I am burning your child, Thea! (*Throwing one*

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or two more quires into the stove.) Your child and Eilert Lövborg's. (*Throws the rest in.*) I am burning—I am burning your child.

FOURTH ACT

The same room at the TESMANS'. *It is evening. In the drawing-room a lighted lamp stands on the table in the corner to the right. The hanging lamp in the inner room is also lighted.*

(HEDDA *walks to and fro in the inner room and disappears for a moment to the left. She is heard to strike a few chords on the piano. Presently she comes in sight again, and enters the drawing-room.*)

(BERTA *enters from the right, through the inner room, with a lighted lamp, which she places on the writing-table. Her eyes are red with weeping, and she has black ribbons in her cap. She goes quietly and circumspectly out to the right.*)

(*A little while afterwards,* MISS TESMAN, *in mourning, with a bonnet and veil on, comes in from the hall.*)

MISS TESMAN. Yes, Hedda—now my poor sister has at last found peace.

HEDDA (*pressing her hand*). I have heard the news already. Tesman sent me a card.

MISS TESMAN. He said he would do so. But I thought nevertheless I ought myself to bring the tidings.

HEDDA. That was very kind of you. She died quite peacefully, did she not?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, she went so calmly, so beautifully. And then she had the great happiness of seeing George once more—and bidding him good-bye. Has he not come home yet?

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HEDDA. No; he wrote that he might be detained. But won't you sit down?

MISS TESMAN. No, thank you. I have so much to do. I must prepare my dear one for her rest as well as I can.

(GEORGE TESMAN *enters by the hall door.*)

HEDDA. How long you have been.

TESMAN. You here, Aunt Julia!

MISS TESMAN. I was just going. Well, have you seen to what you promised?

TESMAN. No, I clean forgot it. My brain is in a whirl. I can't keep my thoughts together.

MISS TESMAN. Why, you mustn't take it so much to heart.

TESMAN. Not take it to heart!

MISS TESMAN. You ought to have expected it. And was it not best for her to be at rest?

TESMAN. Oh yes! Of course——

MISS TESMAN. And now you have other things to think of.

TESMAN. Yes, yes, so I have——

MISS TESMAN. That is the way of the world, Hedda. My home is the house of death, and this—this is the house of life.

HEDDA. Life! Here!

MISS TESMAN. At home we shall be sewing a shroud; and here there will soon be sewing too, I suppose—but of another sort, thank God!

HEDDA. Oh, has he gone and told her!

MISS TESMAN. Yes, therefore we must rejoice. For one thing as well as the other.

HEDDA. You will feel lonely now.

MISS TESMAN. That will not last long. I shall find an occupant for poor Rina's little room.

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TESMAN. Who do you think will take it?

MISS TESMAN. Oh, there's always some invalid body in want of nursing—unfortunately.

HEDDA. Would you really take such a burden upon you again?

MISS TESMAN. A burden! Heaven forgive you, child—it has been no burden to me.

HEDDA. Well, but if you had a stranger on your hands.

MISS TESMAN. Oh, one soon makes friends with the sick; and it's such an absolute necessity for me to have some one to live for. Well, heaven be praised, there will soon be something in this house, too, to keep me busy.

HEDDA. Oh, don't trouble about that.

TESMAN. Oh yes, how nice everything might be——

HEDDA. If——?

TESMAN. Oh, nothing. It will all come right.

MISS TESMAN. Yes, yes, I daresay you two have a great deal to say to each other. Good-bye. I must go home to Rina.

(*There are leave-takings.* MISS TESMAN *goes.*)

HEDDA. I can't make it out. It seems as though this affected you more than it does her.

TESMAN. Oh, it is not that. It's Eilert Lövborg I am so uneasy about.

HEDDA. Is there anything new about him?

TESMAN. I met Mrs. Elfsted this afternoon.

HEDDA. Yes!

TESMAN. And she told me that he had been here early this morning.

HEDDA. Yes, directly after you had gone.

TESMAN. He wanted to see me, I suppose.

HEDDA. No, it was Mrs. Elfsted he asked for.

TESMAN. Did he not inquire about the manuscript too?

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HEDDA. No, it never occurred to him that you had found it.

TESMAN. I can't make it out. I hear he said that he had torn it to pieces.

HEDDA. Yes, so he told us.

TESMAN. But did you not tell him that I had found it? That you were keeping it?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. But, good heavens—! Just think of the desperate state he must have been in.

HEDDA. Desperate! What makes you think that?

TESMAN. Of course it was shame and humiliation that made him say that. That he had wilfully destroyed it.

HEDDA. Yes, perhaps so.

TESMAN. He naturally did not want to confess that he had been in such a state. That he did not know what he had done with his own belongings.

HEDDA. And you did not tell her that you had the packet?

TESMAN. No, I was ashamed on his account.

HEDDA. Be sure you don't say anything.

TESMAN. Well, but it must come out all the same. He must have it back, the sooner the better. Where is it?

HEDDA. I have not got it.

TESMAN. Have not got it? What in the world do you mean? What have you done with it?

HEDDA. I have burnt it.

TESMAN. Burnt! Burnt his manuscript.

HEDDA. Don't scream so. The servant might hear you.

TESMAN. Burnt! Why, good God—! No, no, no, it's impossible.

HEDDA. It is so, nevertheless.

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TESMAN. Do you know what you have done? It's unlawful appropriation of lost property. Just ask Judge Brack, and he'll tell you what it is!

HEDDA. Don't speak of it to any one. Neither to Judge Brack nor to any one else.

TESMAN. But your reason, Hedda! I must know your reason! For I feel that you are concealing something from me. Answer me.

HEDDA. Yes. I did it for your sake.

TESMAN. For mine!

HEDDA. When you came home and spoke so highly of what he had read to you.

TESMAN. Yes yes—what then?

HEDDA. I could not bear the idea that he should throw you into the shade.

TESMAN. Hedda! Is this true?

HEDDA. You must remember that—at this time—. I am not like my usual self——

TESMAN.. Oh, great heavens—! It was for love of me!

HEDDA. Don't shout so. The servant might hear.

TESMAN. Well, let her. I'll tell Berta myself.

HEDDA. Oh, it will be the end of me, all this.

TESMAN. What will?

HEDDA. All this—absurdity.

TESMAN. Absurdity. Well well, then. Perhaps it won't do to say anything to Berta.

HEDDA. Oh—why not?

TESMAN. No, no, I see that. But I must certainly tell Aunt Julia. Oh, she will be so happy, so happy——

HEDDA. When she hears that I have burnt Eilert Lövborg's manuscript?

TESMAN. No, by-the-bye—that affair of the burning—nobody must know about that. But that your love for me has awakened in this way——

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HEDDA. Say nothing about that.

TESMAN. Oh yes—Aunt Julia must share in *that*. Oh, I am so happy—so proud——

HEDDA. Well, be so. But keep it to yourself.

TESMAN. I cannot, Hedda. That would take away half the pleasure of it. I wonder, now, whether this sort of awakening is usual in young wives?

HEDDA. You had better ask Aunt Julia that question too.

TESMAN. I will, some time or other. For she knows all about such things.

(MRS. ELFSTED, *with her cloak on, enters by the hall door. She appears to be much agitated.*)

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, dear Hedda, forgive my coming again——

HEDDA. What is the matter with you, Thea?

TESMAN. Something about Eilert Lövborg again?

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, I am so dreadfully afraid some misfortune has happened to him——

HEDDA. Ah—do you think so?

TESMAN. But, good Lord—what makes you think so, Mrs. Elfsted?

MRS. ELFSTED. I heard them talking of him at my boarding-house, just as I came in——

TESMAN. Well? What did they say?

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, I couldn't make out anything clearly. Either they knew nothing definite, or else—. They stopped talking when they saw me.

TESMAN. You surely misunderstood them——

MRS. ELFSTED. No, no; I am sure it was of him they were talking. And I heard something about the hospital——

TESMAN. About the hospital!

HEDDA. Surely that cannot be.

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MRS. ELFSTED. I was in such mortal terror. And then—just think——

TESMAN. Yes?

MRS. ELFSTED. I went to his lodgings and asked for him——

HEDDA. How could you make up your mind to do such a thing!

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, because I couldn't endure it.

TESMAN. But you didn't find him?

MRS. ELFSTED. No. And the people knew nothing about him. He hadn't been home since yesterday afternoon, they said. Oh, I am sure something has happened to him!

TESMAN. Hedda—how would it be if I were to go and get Brack——

HEDDA. No, not in this affair.

(JUDGE BRACK, *with his hat in his hand, enters by the hall door, which* BERTA *opens, and closes behind him. He looks grave.*)

TESMAN. Oh, is that you, my dear Judge?

BRACK. Yes. It was imperative I should see you.

TESMAN. I can see you have heard about Aunt Rina.

BRACK. Yes, that among other things.

TESMAN. Isn't it sad—eh?

BRACK. Oh, that depends on how you look at it.

TESMAN. Has anything else happened?

BRACK. Yes.

MRS. ELFSTED (*in suspense*). Anything sad, Judge Brack?

BRACK. That, too depends on how you look at it, Mrs. Elfsted.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh! it is something about Eilert Lövborg?

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BRACK. What makes you think that? Have you already heard something?

MRS. ELVSTED. No, no, but——

TESMAN. Oh, for heaven's sake, tell us!

BRACK. Eilert Lövborg has been taken to the hospital. He is lying at the point of death.

TESMAN. At the point of death! In the hospital.

HEDDA. Ah——!

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh God! oh God——

HEDDA (*whispers*). Thea—be careful.

MRS. ELVSTED. I must go to him! I must see him alive.

BRACK. It is useless. No one will be admitted.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, at least tell me what has happened to him?

TESMAN. You don't mean to say that he has himself——!

HEDDA. Yes, I am sure he has.

TESMAN. Hedda, how can you——!

BRACK. Unfortunately you have guessed quite correctly, Mrs. Tesman.

MRS. ELVSTED. Oh, how horrible!

TESMAN. Himself, then——!

HEDDA. Shot himself!

BRACK. Rightly guessed again.

MRS. ELVSTED. When did it happen?

BRACK. This afternoon—between three and four.

TESMAN. And where did he do it?

BRACK. Where? Well—I suppose at his lodgings——

MRS. ELVSTED. No, that is not so; for I was there between seven and eight.

BRACK. Well then, somewhere else. I don't know precisely. I only know that he was found—. He had shot himself—in the breast.

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MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, how awful!

HEDDA. Was it in the breast——?

BRACK. Yes.

HEDDA. Not in the temple?

BRACK. No, it was in the breast.

HEDDA. Well, well, the breast is a good place, too.

BRACK. How do you mean?

HEDDA. Oh, nothing—nothing.

TESMAN. And the wound is dangerous?

BRACK. Absolutely mortal. The end has probably come by this time.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, yes, I feel it! And then not to see him.

TESMAN. How have you learnt this?

BRACK. Through one of the police. A man I had some business with——

HEDDA. At last a deed worth doing!

TESMAN. Hedda—what are you saying?

HEDDA. I say there is beauty in this!

BRACK. H'm—Mrs. Tesman——

MRS. ELFSTED. Beauty! Oh, Hedda—how can you——

TESMAN. But, great heaven—Hedda——

HEDDA. He has passed judgment on himself, and has had the courage to do—the one right thing.

TESMAN. And you can speak thus of something so reprehensible! Fancy—a suicide———

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh yes, yes. But do not condemn him. He did it in delirium——

HEDDA. No, no, that he did not. I am certain of that.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, he did. In delirium. Just as when he tore up our manuscript.

BRACK. The manuscript? Has he torn that up?

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MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, last night.

TESMAN (*softly*). Oh, Hedda—Hedda.

BRACK. H'm—very extraordinary.

TESMAN. To think of his going out of the world without leaving behind him anything that would have immortalised his memory.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, but think, if it could be put together again!

TESMAN. Yes, if it only could. I don't know what I would not give, if it only could——

MRS. ELFSTED, Perhaps it can, Mr. Tesman.

TESMAN. How!

MRS. ELFSTED. Look here. I have kept all the loose notes he used to dictate to me from.

HEDDA. Ah——!

TESMAN. You have them!

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, here. I brought them with me. I was going to ask you or Hedda to keep them.

TESMAN. Oh, let me see. Let me see!

MRS. ELFSTED. But they are in such disorder—so mixed up.

TESMAN. If we could make something out of them. Perhaps if we two put our heads together.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, let us try.

TESMAN. We will manage it. I will dedicate my life to this.

HEDDA. You? Your life?

TESMAN. Yes, or all the time I can spare. My own collections must wait in the meantime. Hedda—you understand. I owe this to my friend.

HEDDA. Perhaps.

TESMAN. And so, my dear Mrs. Elfsted, we will give our whole minds to it. We will control our grief. Will you promise me that?

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MRS. ELFSTED. I will try to do that.

TESMAN. Come here. I can't rest until we have looked through them. A thing of this sort—arranging other people's papers—is just the work for me. Where shall we sit—here? No, in there, in the back room. Excuse me—my dear Judge. Come along, Mrs. Elfsted.

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh, if only it were possible.

(TESMAN *and* MRS. ELFSTED *go into the back room, sit at the table under the hanging lamp, and are soon deep in the papers.* HEDDA *crosses to the stove and sits in the armchair. Presently* BRACK *goes up to her.*)

HEDDA. Oh, what a sense of freedom this gives one.

BRACK. Freedom?

HEDDA. Yes, to know that a deed is still possible in this world—a deed of beauty.

BRACK. H'm—my dear Mrs. Hedda——

HEDDA. Oh, I know what you are going to say. For you are a kind of specialist too, like—you know. You are neither able nor willing to see what there is in this deed of Eilert Lövborg's.

BRACK. Mrs. Hedda—this man was more to you than perhaps you are willing to admit—. Is that not so?

HEDDA. I don't answer that. But now I can see him as he used to be. And I may say this to you. To me his reckless life was not aberration. There was spirit in it. Defiance of public opinion. It was not expiation of faults that he intended. He ended his life in freedom and courage.

BRACK. I am sorry, Mrs. Hedda, but I fear I must dispel an amiable illusion——

HEDDA. Illusion?

BRACK. Which could not have lasted long in any case.

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HEDDA. What do you mean?

BRACK. The thing did not happen exactly as I told it.

HEDDA. How then?

BRACK. Eilert Lövborg did not shoot himself!

HEDDA. Is he not shot?

BRACK. Yes. But it is not a case of suicide.

HEDDA. Now you are belying him!

BRACK. And it was not at his lodgings——

HEDDA. That makes no difference.

BRACK. Eilert Lövborg died of an accidental shot in the same low tavern where he made a disturbance last night.

HEDDA. Impossible! He cannot have been there again to-day.

BRACK. He was there. He went to look for something. Talked wildly. Accused them of having stolen a child from him——

HEDDA. Ah——!

BRACK. I thought he meant his manuscript; but he destroyed that himself, didn't he? So I suppose it must have been his pocket-book.—Then there was a fight. He was thrown downstairs. Had a loaded pistol in his pocket. It goes off, and the ball lodges—not in the breast, but in the bowels.

HEDDA. Oh, what curse it is that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?

BRACK. There is another disagreeable feature in the affair, Mrs. Hedda.

HEDDA. And what is that?

BRACK. The pistol he carried——

HEDDA. Well—what of it——

BRACK. He must have stolen it——

HEDDA. Stolen it! That is not true!

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BRACK. No other explanation is possible—hush——

(TESMAN *and* MRS. ELFSTED *have risen from the table in the back room, and come into the drawing-room.*)

TESMAN (*with the papers in both his hands*). Impossible to see under that lamp. Do you mind our sitting at your writing-table, Hedda?

HEDDA. If you like. No, wait. Let me clear it first.

TESMAN. Oh, there is plenty of room.

HEDDA. No, no, let me clear it. I will take these things in and put them on the piano. There.

(*She takes a case out of the shelf, places sheet music over it and carries it into the inner room, to the left.* TESMAN *lays the papers on the writing-table, and moves the lamp there from the corner table. He and* MRS. ELFSTED *sit down and become engrossed in the papers.* HEDDA *returns.*)

HEDDA. Well, are you getting on?

TESMAN. It will be terribly hard to put in order.

(HEDDA *goes over to the stove, and seats herself in the armchair.* BRACK *stands beside her.*)

HEDDA (*whispers*). What did you say about the pistol?

BRACK. That he must have stolen it.

HEDDA. Why do you think so?

BRACK. Eilert Lövborg was here this morning.

HEDDA. Yes.

BRACK. Were you alone with him?

HEDDA. Part of the time.

BRACK. Were you out of the room whilst he was here?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Try to recollect. Were you not out of the room a moment?

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HEDDA. Yes—perhaps just a moment.

BRACK. And where was your pistol-case during that time?

HEDDA. It stood there on the shelf of the writing-table.

BRACK. Have you looked since, to see whether both the pistols are there?

HEDDA. No.

BRACK. Well, you need not. I saw the one found in his pocket, and I knew it at once.

HEDDA. Have you it with you?

BRACK. No; the police have it.

HEDDA. What will the police do with it?

BRACK. Search till they find the owner.

HEDDA. Do you think they will succeed?

BRACK. Not so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA. And if you do not say nothing?

BRACK. Well—Mrs. Hedda—then comes the scandal.

HEDDA. The scandal!

BRACK. The scandal, of which you are in such mortal terror. You will be brought before the court. Will have to give evidence. Was it stolen? Or did you give it to him? And what conclusions will people draw from that?

HEDDA. That is true. I did not think of that.

BRACK. Well, fortunately, there is no danger, so long as I say nothing.

HEDDA. So I am in your power.

BRACK. I shall not abuse my advantage, Hedda.

HEDDA. I am in your power none the less. A slave! a slave then! Oh, that intolerable thought. I cannot endure it! Never! (*Rises.*) Well, are you getting on, Tesman?

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TESMAN. Heaven knows. It will be the work of months.

HEDDA (*passes her hands softly through* MRS. ELFSTED'S *hair.*) Doesn't it seem strange to you, Thea? Here are you sitting with Tesman, just as you used to sit with Eilert Lövborg.

MRS. ELFSTED. Ah yes, if I could only inspire your husband in the same way.

HEDDA. I am sure you can.

TESMAN. Yes, I really think I begin to feel something of the sort. But won't you go and sit with Brack again?

HEDDA. Is there nothing I can do to help you two?

TESMAN. Nothing in the world. You will have to keep Hedda company, my dear Brack.

BRACK. With great pleasure.

HEDDA. Thanks. But now I am going to lie down on the sofa.

TESMAN. Yes, do.

(HEDDA *goes into the back room and draws the curtains. There is a pause. Suddenly* HEDDA *is heard playing a wild dance on the piano.*)

MRS. ELFSTED. Oh—what is that?

TESMAN (*goes to the curtains*). But, Hedda dear—don't play dance-music. Just think of Aunt Rina——

HEDDA (*in the inner room*). And Aunt Julia. Yes, you're right. But after this, I will be quiet.

TESMAN. It's not good for her to see us at this distressing work. You shall take the empty room at Aunt Julia's, Mrs. Elfsted, and then I will come in the evenings and we can work there.

MRS. ELFSTED. Yes, let us do that.

HEDDA (*calls from the inner room*). I hear what you are saying, Tesman. But how am *I* to get through the evenings?

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TESMAN (*at the writing-table*). Oh, I daresay Judge Brack will be so kind as to look in now and then.

BRACK (*calls loudly*). Every blessèd evening, with all the pleasure in life, Mrs. Hedda. We shall get on capitally together, we two.

HEDDA (*is heard to say*). Thanks for your kindness, Judge.

(*A shot is heard in the inner room.* TESMAN, MRS. ELVSTED *and* BRACK *leap to their feet.* TESMAN *throws back the curtains.* HEDDA *lies on the sofa, lifeless. Screams and cries.* BERTA *appears from the right in the inner room.*)

TESMAN (*shrieks*). Shot herself! Shot herself in the temple!

BRACK (*half-fainting in the armchair by the stove*). Good God!—people don't *do* such things!

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THE MASTER BUILDER

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

HENRIK IBSEN

1892

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FROM THE FIRST ACT

SOLNESS. Well then. I daresay you know that I took Knut Brovik and his son into my employment. About seven or eight years ago. When the old man's business had gone to the dogs.

DR. HERDAL. Yes, so I have understood.

SOLNESS. They are really clever fellows, these two. That is, when they are not working on their own account. But then, a couple of years ago or more, the son took it into his head to get engaged, and the next thing, of course, was that he wanted to begin to build on his own account. That is always the way with these young people.

DR. HERDAL (*laughing*). Yes, they have a bad habit of wanting to marry.

SOLNESS. Just so. Of course that did not suit my plans. H'm—for I needed them for calculating bearing-strains and cubic contents—and all that sort of devilry, you know.

DR. HERDAL. Oh yes, no doubt that's indispensable.

SOLNESS. Yes, it is. But Alfred was absolutely bent on setting to work for himself. No matter what increase of salary I offered him, it was no use.

DR. HERDAL. Oh no, when young fellows get *those* ideas into their heads——

SOLNESS. But one day this girl came to see them on some errand or other. And when I saw how utterly infatuated they were with each other, the thought occurred to me: if I could only get her into my employment, then perhaps he would stay too.

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DR. HERDAL. That was not at all a bad idea.

SOLNESS. Yes, but I did not say a word to her on that subject. Only talked to her a little, in a friendly way, about one thing and another. And she did not know me then. Nor I her either——

DR. HERDAL. Well?

SOLNESS. Well then, the next day, pretty late in the evening, when the other two had gone home, she came here again, and began to talk as if I had made an arrangement with her. About the very thing I had fixed my mind on, but hadn't said a single word about.

DR. HERDAL. That was most extraordinary.

SOLNESS. Yes, was it not? She wanted to know what she would have to do—whether she could begin the next day—and so forth.

DR. HERDAL. Don't you think she did it in order to be with her sweetheart?

SOLNESS. That was what occurred to me at first. But no, that was not it. She seemed to drift quite away from him, when she came here to me.

DR. HERDAL. She drifted over to you, then?

SOLNESS. Yes, entirely. Cannot take her eyes off me. Feels it, when I look at her. Trembles and shakes the moment I come near her. What do you think of *that?*

DR. HERDAL. H'm—that's not very hard to explain.

SOLNESS. Well, but what about the other thing? That she believed I had said to her what I had only wished and willed—silently?

DR. HERDAL. Yes, that is most extraordinary.

SOLNESS. Can you explain that, Doctor?

DR. HERDAL. No, I won't undertake to do that.

SOLNESS. I felt sure you would not; and so I have never cared to talk about it till now. But it's a cursed

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nuisance to me in the long run, you understand. Here have I got to go on day after day pretending—. But I *cannot* do anything else. For if *she* runs away from me —then Alfred will be off too.

FROM THE SECOND ACT

SOLNESS. Yes, thanks to the fire. For then I got money in my hands to build with. To build after my own heart, you understand.

HILDA. For yourself, then?

SOLNESS. No, not at once. But I laid out the big garden in villa lots, and built four or five houses there—. To begin with, you see.

HILDA (*ardently*). Yes, yes, that was very sensible of you. For then the stupid people could see what they were like.

SOLNESS. Yes, they could. And so I came to the front with a rush. Every one who was at all able to, would have a house from me. Since that time I have raised building after building round the outskirts of the town. And far down the fiord too. And right up in the country. And now at last they have begun to talk of me abroad — (*Breaking off.*) Well, who knows — who knows——?

SOLNESS (*with a slight smile*). After all, why shouldn't one play a little with the impossible?

HILDA (*with animation*). Yes, indeed, *that* I can understand very well.

SOLNESS. For, you see, there are some people who are always expecting to win in the lottery. Even when they never have a ticket.

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HILDA (*looking serious*). Oh yes, there must be such trolls in the world, too.

SOLNESS. Why trolls?

HILDA. What would you call it, then?

SOLNESS (*confidentially*). Don't you agree with me, Hilda, that there are certain people who have the power and faculty of *desiring* a thing, *craving* for a thing, *willing* a thing—so persistently and so—so inexorably—that at last it *has* to happen?

HILDA. Of its own accord?

SOLNESS. Yes. Don't you believe that?

HILDA. No, I certainly don't. I think that, if you want to carry anything through, you have got to put your hand to it yourself.

SOLNESS. Pure imagination. It is not one's self alone that does it.

SOLNESS. Why did you not write to me now and then?

HILDA. Oh, because it was so thrilling, not to know when you would come.

SOLNESS. Then you were sure I should come?

HILDA. I expected it every single day, from early in the morning. It was so gloriously thrilling.—But we were going to write on the drawings, Mr. Solness.

MRS. SOLNESS. Oh—I can see what I can see, Halvard.

SOLNESS. Well, after this we shall have nothing more to do with these people. And *that* is a good thing.

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MRS. SOLNESS. Are you really dismissing them?

SOLNESS. Yes.

MRS. SOLNESS. Her as well?

SOLNESS. Was not that what you wished?

MRS. SOLNESS. But how can you get on without *her*—? (*stops and throws a glance at Hilda.*) Oh, perhaps you have another one in reserve, Halvard?

SOLNESS. But, my dear, good Aline——!

HILDA (*playfully*). No, indeed, Mrs. Solness. You needn't be afraid of me. I am not the person to stand at that desk.

MRS. SOLNESS. But Halvard must have somebody with him——

SOLNESS (*changing the subject*). Never mind, never mind—don't let us think about it. It will be all right, Aline. Now all we have to do is to think about moving into our new home—as quickly as we can. This evening we will hang up the wreath—(*Turns to* HILDA.)—right on the very pinnacle of the tower. What do you say to that Miss Hilda?

HILDA (*looks at him with sparkling eyes*). It will be splendid to see you so high up once more.

SOLNESS. Me!

MRS. SOLNESS. For Heaven's sake, Miss Wangel—don't imagine such a thing. When my husband always gets so dizzy.

HILDA. *He* get dizzy!

SOLNESS (*vehemently*). I *don't* get dizzy! It is only your imagination! I don't!

MRS. SOLNESS. Oh, how can you say so, Halvard? Why, you can't even bear to go out on the second storey balcony here.

SOLNESS. You are wrong, I tell you——

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MRS. SOLNESS. Oh, but you always have been so, dear. Why will you never admit it?

SOLNESS. You are wrong, Aline. Perhaps you will see that this evening.

MRS. SOLNESS. No, please God I shall never see that. I will write to the doctor—and I am sure he won't let you do it.

SOLNESS. Why, Aline——!

MRS. SOLNESS. Oh, but you're ill, Halvard! Oh God—Oh God! (*She goes out to the right.*)

FROM THE THIRD ACT

HILDA. All these ten years I have stayed at home, believing in you. Simply believing in you. And every day I have seen you in my thoughts, free and high up.

SOLNESS. Oh, Hilda, it is not every day that one can be so.

HILDA (*imploringly*). Just once more, Mr. Solness.

SOLNESS. I cannot. Have I not told you that what I did then was the impossible?

HILDA. Well then, do the impossible once again!

SOLNESS. Such a thing can never be done again.

HILDA. *You* can do it.

SOLNESS (*looking at her*). How have you become what you are, Hilda?

HILDA. How have you made me what I am?

[Well how?

By willing and daring the impossible.]

SOLNESS. The princess shall have her castle.

HILDA [*jubilant, clapping her hands*). Oh, Mr. Solness——!

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SOLNESS. Her castle in the air the princess shall have. [The one with a firm foundation.]

[If I ever try it, H., I will stand up there and say to him: Hear me, Mighty Lord, thou may'st judge me as thou wilt. But hereafter I will build nothing but the loveliest thing in the world. Build it for a princess, whom I love. H. You would say that! S. Yes. And then I will say to him: Now I shall go down and throw my arms round her and kiss her. H. Many times. S. Many, many times. H. And then—. S. Then I would wave my hat and come down and do as I said to him. H. Do the impossible once again!

Now I see you again as I did when there was song in the air.]

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LITTLE EYOLF

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CHARACTERS

HARALD BORGHEIM.
JOHANNE, his wife.
RITA, his sister.
ALFRED, his son, eleven years old.
EIVIND ALMER, a road engineer.
MISS VARG, Johanne's aunt.

(*The action takes place on* BORGHEIM'S *property, on the fiord.*)

FROM THE FIRST ACT

Well, but that can only be good for him.

RITA. Do you really think so?

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. I don't think one way or the other. Hakon himself is the best judge of such things.

(HAKON SKIOLDHEIM *enters by the door on the left, leading little* ALFRED *by the hand. He has a slim, slight figure and a serious expression. Thin dark hair and beard.* ALFRED *is undersized, and looks somewhat delicate.*)

HAKON SKIOLDHEIM. Well, have you come, Rita?

RITA. Yes, I felt I must—. Welcome home again.

SKIOLDHEIM. Thank you.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Doesn't he look well?

RITA. Splendid! Quite splendid! His eyes are so much brighter! And I suppose you have done a great deal of writing on your travels? I shouldn't wonder if you had finished the whole book, Hakon [Alfred]?

SKIOLDHEIM [ALF]. The book——?

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RITA [A]. Yes, I was sure you would find it go so easily when once you got away.

SKIOLDHEIM. The truth is, I have not written a line of the book.

RITA. Not a line——?

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Oho! I wondered when I found all the paper lying untouched in your bag.

RITA. But, dear me, what have you been doing for these two months [all this time]?

SKIOLDHEIM (*smiling*). Only thinking, thinking, thinking.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM (*putting her arm round his neck*). And thinking a little, too, of those you had left at home?

SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, you may be sure of that. I have thought a great deal of you.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Oh, how nice of you.

RITA. But you haven't even touched the book. And yet you can look so happy. And so contented with yourself. That is not what you generally do—I mean when your work is going badly.

SKIOLDHEIM. You are right there. For I have been such a fool hitherto, Rita. All the best that is in you goes into thinking. What you put on paper is worth very little.

RITA. Worth very little!

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Oh but, Hakon——!

ALFRED. Oh yes, Papa, what *you* write is worth a great deal!

SKIOLDHEIM (*smiling, stroking his hair*). Well, well, since *you* say so— But I can tell you, some one is coming after me who will do it better.

ALFRED. Who can that be? Oh, tell me!

SKIOLDHEIM. Only wait—you may be sure he will

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come, and let us hear of him. But next summer, when I go to the mountains again, I will take you with me, Alfred.

ALFRED. Take me!

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Oh fie, Hakon—are you thinking of deserting me again?

RITA (*to Alfred*). Would you not like to go with him, little boy?

ALFRED (*considering*). Oh, yes—I think I should. If it is not very dangerous——

SKIOLDHEIM. Dangerous? How do you mean?

ALFRED. Well, might I not easily fall and be crippled?

SKIOLDHEIM (*decisively*). You must and shall come with me to the mountains, my boy.

RITA. And then you must ask your father to let you learn to shoot, and hunt, and swim—and all that sort of thing. Would you not like that, Alfred?

ALFRED. Yes, I should like that very much.—Well—I should only have to be rather careful——

SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, you would have to be, of course. But now you can run down into the garden and amuse yourself.

ALFRED. Shall I not take some books with me?

SKIOLDHEIM. No, no, no books.

ALFRED. Well then, I'll just go down and amuse myself.

(*He is going out on to the veranda, but stops and comes back.*)

ALFRED. Oh, no—I dare not!

SKIOLDHEIM. Why daren't you?

ALFRED. Because Aunt Ellen is coming that way!

SKIOLDHEIM. Are *you* so afraid of her too?

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. What can she want here?

ALFRED. Papa, do you think it is true that she is a were-wolf at night?

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SKIOLDHEIM. Oh, not at all. What put that into your head?

ALFRED. I don't know, but that's what I think.

SKIOLDHEIM. She has had a lot of trouble. And it has made her rather strange. That is all.

(MISS VARG *comes up the steps on to the veranda. She is old and grey-haired. A thin little shrunken figure. Old-fashioned flowered gown. Black hood and cloak. She has in her hand a large red umbrella, and carries a black bag over her arm.*)

MISS VARG. Good morning, good morning to you all! It is long since I set foot here.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, it is a long time. Won't you sit down and rest a little?

MISS VARG. Yes, indeed! Thanks! (*Seats herself on a chair by the sofa*). I have been out at my work. And must go out again. And it takes your strength out of you.

SKIOLDHEIM. So you have been out this morning——?

MISS VARG. Yes, over on Grönö. (*Laughing to herself.*) The people sent for me last night, to be sure. They didn't like it a bit. But at last they had to bite the sour apple—. (*Looks at Alfred, and nods.*) The sour apple, my boy. The sour apple.

ALFRED (*involuntarily, timidly*). Why did they have to——?

MISS VARG. What?

ALFRED. To bite it?

MISS VARG. Why, because they couldn't keep body and soul together.

ALFRED (*turns a doubtful and questioning look upon his father*).

SKIOLDHEIM. Why could they not keep body and soul together?

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Miss Varg. Because of the rats and mice, of course.

Alfred. The rats and——!

Mrs. Skioldheim. Ugh! Poor people! Have they so many of them?

Miss Varg (*laughing*). Yes, it was all alive and swarming with them. Both indoors and out. They came creepy-crawly up into the beds all night long. They plumped into the milk-cans, and they went pattering all over the floor, backwards and forwards. But then *I* came.

Alfred. How can any one dare [I could never dare] go there——! [I shall never go there, Auntie.]

Miss Varg. I dare. And then I took them with me —every one. The sweet little creatures! I made an end of every one of them.

Alfred (*with a shriek*). Papa—look! look!

Skioldheim. What is it?

Mrs. Skioldheim. Good heavens, Alfred!

Alfred. There's something wriggling in the bag!

Mrs. Skioldheim (*shrieks*). Ugh!

Miss Varg (*laughing*). Oh, you needn't be afraid of such a little thing.

Skioldheim. But what *is* it?

Miss Varg (*loosening the string of the bag*). Why, it's only little Mopsëman. Come out, my little friend!

(*A little dog with a broad black snout pokes its head out of the bag.*)

Miss Varg (*to* Alfred). Come a little nearer. He won't bite. Come along!

Alfred. No, I dare not.

Miss Varg (*stroking the dog*). Don't you think he has a gentle, friendly countenance, my young master?

Alfred [(*pointing*)]. That thing *there?*

Miss Varg. Yes, this thing here.

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ALFRED [(*staring fixedly at the dog*)] (*almost under his breath*). I think he has the horriblest—countenance I ever saw.

MISS VARG (*closing the bag*). Oh, it will come—it will come, right enough.

ALFRED ([*drawing nearer*,] *involuntarily strokes the bag*). But he is lovely—lovely all the same.

MISS VARG (*in a tone of caution*). But now he is so tired, so utterly tired out, poor thing. For it takes the strength out of you,—that sort of work.

SKIOLDHEIM. What sort of work?

MISS VARG. Luring.

SKIOLDHEIM. Then is it the dog that lures the rats?

MISS VARG. Mopsëman and I. I slip a string through his collar, and then I lead him three times round the house [,and play on my Pan's pipes]. And then they have to come out of their hiding-places—every one of them. [All the blessed little creatures.] Whether they like it or not.

ALFRED. And then does he bite them?

MISS VARG. Oh, not at all. No, we go down to the boat, he and I do—and then they follow after us [,—both the big ones and the little children].

ALFRED (*eagerly*). And what then——?

MISS VARG. Then I take my seat in the stern. [And play on my Pan's pipes.] And Trond pushes out from the land. And Mopsëman swims behind. And I hold him by the string. And all the rats and all the mice, they follow [and follow] us. Ay, for they *have* to.

ALFRED. Why do they have to?

MISS VARG. Just because they want not to. [Because they are so deadly afraid of the water—that is why they have got to plunge into it.]

ALFRED. Are they drowned, then?

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MISS VARG. Every blessed one. [And then they are at peace, the lovely little things. Down there they sleep sweetly and securely.] (*She rises.*) In the old days, I can tell you—I didn't need any Mopsëman. For then I did the luring myself—in another way.

ALFRED. And what did you lure then?

MISS VARG. Men. One most of all. One in particular.

ALFRED (*eagerly*). Oh, who was that one? Tell me!

MISS VARG (*laughing*). It was my own sweetheart, it was [, little heart-breaker].

ALFRED. And why did you lure him?

MISS VARG. Because he had gone away from me [I loved him so dearly]. Far, far away over the salt sea waves. But I drew him and drew him home to me again. I almost had him.—But then my grasp failed. He was gone—for ever.

ALFRED. Well, where is he now, then?

MISS VARG. Down where all the rats are.—But now I must really be off and get to business again. Have you any use for me here? I could finish it all off while I am about it.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. No, thank you, Miss Varg—I don't think we require anything.

MISS VARG. Well, well, you can never tell—. If there should be anything, just send for Aunt Ellen. (*Laughs.*) Isn't it strange that everybody calls me Aunt Ellen? And yet I have no living kinsfolk—neither in heaven or earth. Well, good-bye, good-bye to you all.

(*She goes out by the door on the right. Shortly afterwards,* ALFRED *slips cautiously and unnoticed out into the garden.*)

RITA. To-day she was almost horrible.

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MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. I think she is so always.

SKIOLDHEIM. I can very well understand the sort of spellbound fascination that she talked about. Nature among the glaciers and the great waste places has something of the same magic about it.

RITA (*looks attentively at him*). [What is it that has happened to you—] Something seems almost to have transformed you, Hakon.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, don't you think so too?

SKIOLDHEIM. Something *has* happened, that has transformed me. It has happened within me. For in external reality I have had no adventure on my journey.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM (*seats herself on the sofa*). You must tell us all about it.

SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, let us sit down, too, Rita—then I will try.

(*He seats himself on the sofa at his wife's side.* RITA *on a chair by the table.*)

SKIOLDHEIM (*after a brief pause*). The journey has really made me so happy and light-hearted. But there has been a tinge of melancholy with it, that I cannot shake off.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. That must be because you have not been able to work——

SKIOLDHEIM (*smiles rather sadly*). Yes, you know me. You know that hitherto it has been so with me.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM (*smiles*). Very cross and fretful. Quite out of humour when there was now and then a difficulty with your writing.

SKIOLDHEIM. Well, you see, my dear Andrea—I have now got over those vexations.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. While you were in the mountains?

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SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, up in the great solitude.—Well I can't say I have not been a happy man hitherto. But I have lived my life far too much in the study. Without cares, without troubles of any kind. Abundance on every side.—(*Giving them his hands.*) And then you two to flatter me and spoil me.

RITA. All we have done is to understand you, Hakon.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. We have believed in you. And tried to go with you.

SKIOLDHEIM. When I look back—. Book after book I have sent out into the world. They were well done, I believe. And they have been well received too. And now the masterpiece was to come out. The work on the spiritual [psychological] doctrine of life——

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, but it will come out—it will come out, Hakon. Now that you are at home again——

SKIOLDHEIM. It will never come out, dear—. Must never come out.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Good heavens, but why not?

SKIOLDHEIM. Because there is a fundamental defect in it.

RITA. A fundamental defect? But can you not remedy it?

SKIOLDHEIM. No, it is irreparable, Rita.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, but now that you have discovered it——

RITA. But what can this fundamental defect be?

SKIOLDHEIM. I have not taken renunciation into account.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Renunciation?

SKIOLDHEIM. Renunciation, yes. Self-denial. The desire—the joy of self-sacrifice. All that should be the inmost core of one's conduct.

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RITA. Well, but why not include all this now?

SKIOLDHEIM (*shakes his head*). It shall not be put into any book. What I have learnt to see—shall be made part of my own life's conduct.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. What do you mean by that?

SKIOLDHEIM. You see—every family—that has breeding, be it observed—has its ascending series of generations; it rises from father to son, until it reaches the highest point the family is capable of attaining. And then it goes down again.

RITA. You are destined to attain the highest, Hakon.

SKIOLDHEIM. My belief in that has been the great delusion of my life.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. You don't believe it any longer!

SKIOLDHEIM. No. Now I know that it is not so. I have usurped a throne. Now I resign it. I abdicate——

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. In whose favour should you abdicate?

SKIOLDHEIM. In favour of the rightful one.

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM. Yes, but who, who, in Heaven's name, is the rightful one?

SKIOLDHEIM. Alfred [Eivind].

RITA. Alfred [Eivind]!

MRS. SKIOLDHEIM [MRS. ALMER]. Alfred [Eivind]! Do you think that?

SKIOLDHEIM [ALMER]. I see it. He will be the summit and crown of the Skioldheim stock.

MRS. ALMER. Ah, do you believe that, Alfred?

ALMER. I believe it confidently. I will devote all my powers to it. I will be his teacher——

MRS. ALMER. Oh, but why burden your life so? We have no need of that.

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ALLMER. It is not any technical knowledge that I want to cram him with. It is the art of life itself that I will try to make him understand. Make the art of life his very nature.

MRS. ALLMER. But, Alfred, what is the 'art of life'? There is no art in living, I should think.

ALLMER. Don't you think so?

MRS. ALLMER. No, it is the simplest thing in the world. Living! When one has enough to live on, as we have. And when one can live exactly as one pleases. And need do nothing but what one thinks right and proper.

ALLMER. Yes, you have a bright and happy disposition, Andrea.

MRS. ALLMER. You ought to cultivate the same.

ALLMER. It will come to me through the fulfilment of my duty.

MRS. ALLMER. What duty?

ALLMAR. My highest duty. The duty of making every side of Eivind's individuality attain its highest, fullest development.

MRS. ALLMER. Do you hold that to be your highest duty?

ALLMER. Yes, for a father there is none higher.

MRS. ALLMER. Nor for a mother either, I suppose?

ALLMER. No, that is understood. If I say *I*, it is only an instance, a relic, of my old egoism. Such things are not so easy to tear up by the roots. I mean, of course, *we*. We two in fellowship, Andrea.

MRS. ALLMER. No, my dearest Alfred, I really cannot be altogether with you in this.

ALLMER. You cannot devote your existence to perfecting our child! As far as we are able.

MRS. ALLMER. Oh, you talk about existence. Ex-

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istence—that is life—one's sense of happiness, I think it might be called.

ALLMER (*seriouly, almost severely*). I know of no deeper sense of happiness than that of seeing Eivind grow under my hands.

MRS. ALLMER. But you used only to occupy yourself with him in such a very desultory way.

ALLMER. I am sorry to say you are right there. I have been too much taken up by myself and by——

MRS. ALLMER. —and by——?

ALLMER. —by all these morbid, distorted, baseless fancies that I, myself, had some special mission in the world. Something of extreme importance and moment —something that concerned myself alone.

MRS. ALLMER. Is this all that has occupied you? Occupied your life, Alfred?

ALLMER. Yes.

MRS. ALLMER. Nothing else at all?

ALLMER. Nothing worth mentioning, as far as I can see.

MRS. ALLMER. No *person* either? No other person?

ALLMER. Other person? What do you mean? Who should *that* be?

MRS. ALLMER. Myself, I suppose.

ALLMER. Oh, you, yes. But, my dearest Andrea, that is a matter of course——

MRS. ALLMER. No, no, no! I won't hear of anything that is a matter of course. I will have it to be because I am myself. And because you are yourself.

ALLMER. But, dearest Andrea, that's just as it was in the days of our honeymoon——

MRS. ALLMER. Yes, and so it must continue.

ALLMER. No, but look here—we must begin to be reasonable some day.

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MRS. ALLMER. Never in this world will you get me to be reasonable. Not on this point. This talk about being reasonable—it is nothing but excuses—when one doesn't care any more.

ALLMER. No, but listen to me——

MRS. ALLMER. I have one thing to say to you, Alfred —I will not consent to give up my place—the first place in your heart. Not even for my own little boy.

RITA. Alfred must always have some one to devote himself to. He has always been so. Towards me too. As early as I can remember.

MRS. ALLMER. Is it only this that has put you in such wild spirits to-day?

BORGHEIM. Yes, and all the brightness and hopefulness [bright and hopeful prospects] that is being showered upon me [that are opening out before me].

MRS. ALLMER. Is there still something more?

BORGHEIM. Yes, there is! There is—. No, I can't keep it in any longer. (*Turns to* RITA.) Shall we——?

RITA (*quickly and softly*). No, no—! Oh, take a little walk in the garden, you mean?

BORGHEIM. Walk—? Yes, that is just what I meant.

RITA. Yes, I should like to.

ALLMER. And [while you are there] you can see what Eivind is doing. He is playing down there.

BORGHEIM. Oh, then Eivind has begun to play now? He used always to be sitting over his books.

ALLMER. There is to be an end of that now. I am going to make a regular open-air boy of him.

BORGHEIM. Ah, now, that's right! Out into the open air with him. Good Lord, what can we possibly

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do better than play in this blessed world? For my part, I think all life is one long playtime!

(*He and* RITA *go out on the veranda and down through the garden.*)

ALLMER (*looking after them*). Is there anything between those two?

MRS. ALMER. I am beginning almost to think so. Would it displease you if there were?

ALLMER. It would not exactly displease me. But of course, I am in a way responsible for Rita. And it is always a precarious thing when two people form an attachment of this sort.

MRS. ALLMER (*looking at him*). You mean that it does not last?

ALLMER. One can never tell. Even those who engage themselves cannot tell that.

MRS. ALLMER. For my part, I don't think at all ill of Borgheim.

ALLMER. No, dear—ill? Who is saying anything of the sort? But I am so afraid that those two have no right to undergo transformation together.

MRS. ALLMER. Transformation? Must they do that?

ALLMER. Or develop—if you prefer it. Mature. Grow. You must remember that in married life new situations are formed. Little by little, you understand. New duties assert themselves. The children, too, claim their rights. They *have* the first claim, Andrea.

MRS. ALLMER (*close to him, almost wildly*). Do you say that! The first. Do you say that, Alfred!

ALLMER. Yes, for that is how I have come to look at things.

MRS. ALLMER. Then you don't love me any more?

ALLMER. Andrea, how can you say such a thing? For it is impossible that you can mean it!

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MRS. ALLMER. Oh yes, I am not far from meaning it now. You are no longer the same to me as you used to be. Not as you were the first year.

ALLMER. Never have you been dearer to me than you are now, Andrea.

MRS. ALLMER. But not in the same way. You have begun to divide yourself between me and your work. And I will not endure that. I want you entirely to myself. (*Throwing her arms round his neck.*) Oh, Alfred, Alfred, I cannot give you up!

(*Engineer* BORGHEIM *and* RITA *come up from the garden.*)

BORGHEIM. There! Hurrah! Now I have permission to tell the news!

MRS. ALLMERS. It is scarcely necessary, is it, dear Mr. Borgheim?

BORGHEIM. Ah? Is it not? Have you really been able to notice anything in us?

MRS. ALLMERS. Oh yes, indeed.

BORGHEIM. Well, now she has surrendered. To me—unconditionally. She hesitates no longer——

MRS. ALLMERS. Then she did before?

BORGHEIM. I can't say she did not.

ALLMERS. I hope this may mean happiness to you, dear Rita.

RITA (*kissing his hand*). Thanks, thanks for all you have been to me.

ALLMERS. Rita! My little Rita!

BORGHEIM. And now she is going with me. To share my work. We may have mountain passes enough to overcome. And abrupt precipices that might make one dizzy.

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ALLMERS. Oh, if you but keep together in sympathy —all will be well.

MRS. ALLMERS. And let no evil eye [come between you] and take him from you, Rita.

RITA. Evil eye?

SECOND ACT

A little, open place by the side of the fiord, on ALLMERS'S *property. Mostly fir-trees, but with birches among them. A bench, a round table, and one or two chairs, all made of tree-trunks and boughs with the bark on, are set up on the right. Some large boulders lie on the beach and out in the water. It is about noon, on a sunny day. The fiord lies as still as a mirror.*

(ALFRED ALLMERS, *in his grey summer clothes, but with a mourning band on the arm, sits on the bench, resting his arms on the table. His grey felt hat, also with a mourning band, lies on one of the chairs. He sits still for a while, and gazes absently out over the water. Then* MISS ANDREA ALLMERS, *dressed entirely in mourning, comes down a little wooded hill on the left, and goes quietly up to him.*)

MISS ANDREA. Are you sitting down here, Alfred?

ALLMERS (*nods slowly without answering*).

(ANDREA *moves his hat to the table and sits down on the chair.*)

ANDREA. I have been searching for you such a long time. Have you been sitting here all the time?

ANDREA. Oh, but it is not at all certain that it happened so——

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ALLMERS. Yes, it is. I am sure of it. It must have happened so. The people down below—they say that Miss Warg rowed out. She sat in the stern of the boat and the dog swam behind on a string——

ANDREA. Yes, yes, but all the same—that doesn't——

ALLMERS. And, you know, there are some who saw Eyolf standing at the end of the steamboat pier. A moment later he was gone. No one saw any more of him——

ANDREA. Yes, they say so, I know, but——

ALLMERS. She has drawn him down, Andrea—there is no doubt about it.

ANDREA. But, Alfred, why should she do it?

ALLMERS. Yes, that is just the question. Why should she—? —Eyolf certainly never did her any harm. He never called names after her; he never threw stones at her dog. Why, he had never seen her till yesterday. Nor would it be like Eyolf to do such things. So meaningless. So utterly meaningless. And yet the order of the world requires it.

ANDREA. Have you spoken to Rita of this?

ALLMERS. I feel as if I can talk better to you about it.

ANDREA. Alfred, you should talk to Rita too.

ALLMERS. I will do so. Both to you and to her.—But now you will soon be leaving us.

ANDREA. That will not make a separation between you and me, I hope.

ALLMERS. No, I don't think I could imagine such a thing.

ANDREA. We shall still be near to each other, however far away I may go.

ALLMERS. But it will be lonely for Rita and me. When *you* go away from us too.

ANDREA. I believe Rita would rather have it so.

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ALLMERS (*looking at her*). She would rather——?

ANDREA. She would rather have you entirely to herself.

ALLMERS. Have you noticed that?

ANDREA. Yes, now and then.

ALLMERS. But I don't think that applies to you, Andrea.

ANDREA. No, perhaps not so much to me as to others.

ALLMERS. For she knows, of course, what we two have been to each other all our days.

ANDREA. Oh, Alfred—say rather, what you have been to me. You have been everything to me. No sacrifice has been too great for you.

ALLMERS. Oh, nonsense, sacrifice. Oh, I have loved you so, ever since you were a little child. And then it seemed to me that I had so much injustice to make up for.

ANDREA. You were generally away from home at that time. For I am thinking more particularly of the years when you were at the University.

ALLMERS. Yes, but, dearest Andrea—I was often at home on visits.

ANDREA. But all the same——

ALLMERS. You have never hinted at such a thing before now. I thought the fault must be all on father's side. If there *was* any fault.

ANDREA. Oh, I don't think the fault is ever entirely on one side——

ALLMERS. You may be right there. But tell me——

ANDREA. Oh, please, Alfred—say no more about this! (*Looks into the wood on the right.*) Here come Rita and Bergheim.

ALLMERS. Shall we go and meet them?

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ANDREA. They can see us. They are coming this way.

ALLMERS. Have you loved Bergheim long?

ANDREA (*with a rapid glance at him*). Loved him?

ALLMERS. Yes?

ANDREA. I have only known him such a short time.

ALLMERS. And now you are going away with him. So far, far away. I never thought that we two should be parted.

ANDREA. Nor I either.

ALLMERS (*looking before him*). Where is Eyolf now? Can anyone tell me that? No one in all the world. I know only that he is gone from me. And soon you will be gone from me too, Andrea. No one, no one of my own kin.

ANDREA. You have Rita.

ALLMERS. Rita is no kin to me—it isn't like having a sister——

ANDREA (*eagerly*). Do you say that, Alfred?

ALLMERS. Yes. The Allmers family is a thing apart. We have always had vowels for our initials. And we have all the same colour of eyes.

ANDREA. I too, do you think?

ALLMERS. No, that's true. Not you. You are not like father. You take more after your mother. But all the same——

ANDREA. All the same——?

ALLMERS. Living together, I believe, has stamped us alike—formed us in each other's image. Mentally and outwardly.

ANDREA. Do you feel it so, Alfred?

ALLMERS. Yes, that is just how I feel it.

ANDREA. Then you force me to tell you——

ALLMERS. What? What is it? Tell me!

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ANDREA (*looking out to the right*). Presently. Here they are coming.

(MRS. RITA ALLMERS *and Engineer* BORGHEIM *come forward through the trees.*)

ALLMERS. Yes, do so.

BORGHEIM (*to* ANDREA). Andrea—shall we go a little way along the road meanwhile?

ANDREA. With pleasure.

(*She and* BORGHEIM *go off along the shore to the left.*)

(ALLMERS *wanders about for a little; then he seats himself on the bench on the left.* RITA *goes over to him.*)

MRS. ALLMERS. Can you think the thought, Alfred —that we have lost him!

ALLMERS. We must accustom ourselves to think. it

MRS. ALLMERS. I cannot. I cannot. But is it so certain that he is gone—for ever?

ALLMERS. But people say they saw him lying down on the bottom. And then the current came and carried him away.

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, yes, I know that. But it is not that I mean.

ALLMERS. What then?

MRS. ALLMERS. He seems to be about me just the same. More, a thousand times more than before.

ALLMERS (*bitterly.*) He seems so now?

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, yes. But that is not enough. I must see him. Hear him. Feel him——

ALLMERS. You were so well able to do without him before—for half a day at a time——

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, for then I knew I had him all the same.

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ALLMERS (*sadly*). Now we have him no longer. Things have come about, as you wished——

MRS. ALLMERS. What did I wish?

ALLMERS (*looking severely at her*). That little Eyolf were not here.

MRS. ALLMERS. That little Eyolf should not stand between us. That was what I wished!

ALLMERS. Well, well, he does not stand between us any more, poor boy.

MRS. ALLMERS (*looking at him*). Perhaps now more than ever.

ALLMERS. You never really and truly loved him.

MRS. ALLMERS. Eyolf would never let me take him really and truly to my heart.

ALLMERS. Because you did not want to.

MRS. ALLMERS. Oh yes, I did. I did want to. But some one stood in the way [—even from the first].

ALLMERS. I, do you mean? [Do you mean that I stood in the way?]

MRS. ALLMERS. Oh, no—not at first.

ALLMERS. Who, then?

MRS. ALLMERS. Andrea.

ALLMERS. Andrea? Can you say that, Rita?

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes; Andrea took him to her heart from the time when he was quite a little child.

ALLMERS. If she did so, she did it in love.

MRS. ALLMERS. That is just it. I cannot endure to share anything with others. Not in love.

ALLMERS. We two should have shared him between us in love.

MRS. ALLMERS. We? The truth is you have never had any real love for the child.

ALLMERS (*looks at her in surprise*). *I* have not—I How can you say—how can you think such a thing!

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MRS. ALLMERS. No, you have not. You used to be so utterly taken up by your work.

ALLMERS. Yes, and I sacrificed it for Eyolf's sake——

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, but not out of love for him.

ALLMERS. Why then? Tell me what you suppose!

MRS. ALLMERS. You had begun to be consumed with mistrust of yourself. All the happy confidence—all the hope that you had a great task to perform, had begun to desert you. I could see that.

ALLMERS. Oh yes, you may be right there. But all the same——

MRS. ALLMERS. Then you went away. Up into the great, free waste places. And that must have exalted your mind——

ALLMERS. It has. It has. Be sure of that, Andrea!

MRS. ALLMERS. But not exalted it to love——

ALLMERS (*eagerly*). It was up there in the vastness and solitude that I gave up my place in life for little Eyolf's sake.

MRS. ALLMERS. But why—why did you give it up?

ALLMERS. Why?

MRS. ALLMERS. [I will tell you.—ALLMERS. Well?] Because you needed something new to fill up your life. Andrea had so often talked to you of Eyolf's great abilities, of all the possibilities there were in him—and that sort of thing——

ALLMERS. Yes, she took most interest in him. But it was for that reason, you think——?

MRS. ALLMERS. You wanted to make a prodigy of him, Alfred. Because he was *your* child. But you never really loved him. Never cared for him sincerely for his own sake.

ALLMERS. Do you think that?

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MRS. ALLMERS. Yes. If I had known that you loved him sincerely, I might perhaps have been resigned to sharing you with him. Although—no, perhaps not, after all.

ALLMERS (*looking thoughtfully at her*). But if it is so, Rita, then we two have never really possessed our own child.

MRS. ALLMERS. No, not in perfect love.

ALLMERS. And now we are sorrowing so bitterly for him.

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, isn't it curious that we should grieve like this over a little stranger boy?

ALLMERS (*pained*). Oh, don't call him a stranger!

MRS. ALLMERS. We never won the boy, Alfred. Not I—nor you either.

ALLMERS (*wringing his hands*). And now it is too late! Too late!

MRS. ALLMERS. And no consolation. No hope anywhere—in anything!

ALLMERS (*in quiet emotion*). I dreamed about him last night. I thought I saw him standing in the garden. I felt so glad. So rich. So he was not lost to us. We had him. And the terrible reality was nothing but a dream. Oh, how I thanked and blessed——

MRS. ALLMERS (*moaning softly*). I could not. I could not [never could]!

ALLMERS. Not if I went there at the same time?

MRS. ALLMERS. No, no! Not for all the glory of heaven!

ALLMERS. Nor I.

MRS. ALLMERS. No, you feel it so, too, don't you—you could not either, could you?

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ALLMERS. For here we are at home—for the present.

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, for here is [the] happiness [we can understand].

ALLMERS. Happiness?

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, we *must* find happiness again. Without happiness I cannot live.

ALLMERS. Where are we to find it now?

MRS. ALLMERS (*shaking her head*). No, no, no—you are right there. We shall never find it, while we do nothing but grieve over little Eyolf. (*Looks inquiringly at him.*) But——?

ALLMERS. But——?

MRS. ALLMERS (*quickly, as though in terror*). No, no. I dare not say it! Nor even think it.

ALLMERS. Yes, say it! Say it, Rita!

RITA (*hesitatingly*). Could we not try to—? Would it not be possible to forget him?

ALLMERS. Forget Eyolf!

MRS. ALLMERS. Forget our grief for him, I mean.

ALLMERS. Can you wish it?

MRS. ALLMERS. Yes, if it were possible. (*With an outburst.*) For I cannot bear this for ever!

ALLMERS. But the memory, Rita? We cannot escape that. And the memory brings remorse.

MRS. ALLMERS. The memory of little Eyolf will soften with time. Oh, don't you think so, Alfred?

ALLMERS. May be—some day, perhaps. But the sense of void—can that ever be deadened?

MRS. ALLMERS (*looking before her*). No, *there* it is. The void—the void. Every day, every hour—it will assert itself in the smallest trifle.

ALLMERS. Even the empty chair at table. Even the fact that his coat is not hanging in its usual place in the hall——

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MRS. ALLMERS. And happiness will not grow in the void. Neither you nor I are capable of bearing this, Alfred. We must try to think of something that will bring forgetfulness.

ALLMERS. Oh, what could that be?

MRS. ALLMERS. Could we not see what travelling would do—far away from here?

ALLMERS. From home? When you know you are never really well anywhere but here.

MRS. ALLMERS. Well, then, let us have crowds of people about us! Keep open house! Try something of that sort that might deaden and dull our thoughts——

ALLMERS. But such a life would be impossible for me—you know that. I simply could not endure it. No, rather than that, I would try to take up my work again.

MRS. ALLMERS. Your work—the work that has been like a wall between us?

ALLMERS. It has not, Rita. You are wrong there.

MRS. ALLMERS. No, I am not! But I will not consent to share you. I want you utterly and entirely as you used to be. You must give me your love again, unaltered—I will have it, I tell you.

ALLMERS. That love was an intoxication, and it is dead [quenched].

MRS. ALLMERS. And you can say that——!

ALLMERS. It is dead. But in what I now feel for you there is a resurrection——

MRS. ALLMERS. I don't care a bit about any resurrection——

ALLMERS. Rita——!

MRS. ALLMERS. I am a warm-blooded being. I have not fishes' blood in my veins.—And now to be imprisoned for life! Imprisoned in grief and bereavement.

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ALLMERS (*looking thoughtfully at her*). Ah, can this be properly called grief and bereavement—this that we feel?

MRS. ALLMERS. What else?

ALLMERS. Despair.

MRS. ALLMERS. Despair!

ALLMERS. Yes—despair. I believe that is the right name for it.

MRS. ALLMERS (*looking at him with anxious inquiry*). Why should we——!

ALLMERS. Have you no inkling of the reason?

MRS. ALLMERS. No. Yes. No. Tell me!

ALLMERS. You say it first.

MRS. ALLMERS. No, you must——

ALLMERS. Little Eyolf was really rather in our way——

MRS. ALLMERS. Oh, Alfred—how can you——!

ALLMERS. You were never a real mother to him. And I was never entirely a father.

MRS. ALLMERS. What else then?

ALLMERS. It sounds so paltry when I say it.

MRS. ALLMERS. I don't understand you, Alfred.

ALLMERS. But it is not paltry. I don't think it can be called so.

MRS. ALLMERS. No, no—but what in the world——?

ALLMERS. You were rich and I was poor, Rita.

MRS. ALLMERS (*takes a step towards him*). I don't believe that!

ALLMERS. So it came about, nevertheless.

MRS. ALLMERS. Paltry, then!

ALLMERS. I had a sister to provide for. Remember that.

MRS. ALLMERS. Then it was for her sake——!

ALLMERS. We were alone in the world. She and I.

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I worked for her, so long as I was able. Till I was ready to drop——

MRS. ALLMERS. And you can stand here and avow all this afterwards!

ALLMERS. It seemed to me I ought to free you of the anguish of self-reproach. Now I think you know the reason of your never being able really to love Eyolf.

MRS. ALLMERS. Oh, but I have loved him.

ALLMERS. You always looked upon him as though an insoluble riddle lay behind.

MRS. ALLMERS. You have interpreted it wrongly. I was always trembling at the prospect of his taking you away from me. (*With a wild outburst.*) And now you tell me yourself that I have never possessed you.

ALLMERS. You have! I found you and won you so entirely when Eyolf was born.

MRS. ALLMERS (*scornfully*). Yes, I daresay. For he belonged to the family, of course. The child—and the sister! They are something apart.—Oh, how I hate—how I hate her!

(ANDREA *and* BORGHEIM *come forward along the path by the shore.*)

ALLMERS. Well, here we are still, Andrea.

ANDREA. And you have been talking things over. We will not disturb you.

MRS. ALLMERS. No, let us all walk together. We must have company about us in future. Alfred and I cannot get on alone.

ALLMERS. Yes, go on, you two. I have something to say to you, Andrea!

MRS. ALLMERS. Oh! Very well, will you come, Mr. Borgheim?

(MRS. ALLMERS *and* BORGHEIM *go up through the wood on the right.*)

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ANDREA. You have something to say to me, Alfred?

ALLMERS. Yes, I want to ask you something.

ANDREA. Well?

ALLMERS. Tell me, is there anything between you and Borgheim?

ANDREA. Oh, I don't know how to answer you.

ALLMERS. What? You don't know——

ANDREA. I have no right to answer.

ALLMERS. We two must remain together.

ANDREA. But we are together.

ALLMERS. Not here. I do not feel that I am at home here any longer.

ANDREA. Alfred!

ALLMERS. Rita and I cannot share the same love.

ANDREA. Oh, don't say that!

ALLMERS. Yes, yes, I see it now. And that is why I come to you.

ANDREA. Oh, but I cannot help you in this.

ALLMERS. Yes, you can. You and no one else. It is a sister I need——

ANDREA (*almost in a whisper*). A sister!

ALLMERS. A sister's love. Something pure! Something holy. I feel I shall grow wicked here.

ANDREA. Alfred! Alfred!

ALLMERS. Since you were a little child we have kept together. We two alone. In those days you needed me. And I did what I could for you.

ANDREA. All that I am I owe to you.

ALLMERS. Not so much to me. But to our beautiful, holy companionship.

ANDREA. Every fibre of my mind has received its stamp from you. By you. Through you.

ALLMERS. No, no. This has come about through the calm, inscrutable mystery.——

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ANDREA. What, Alfred?

ALLMERS. The mystery of the love of brother and sister. The inexplicable attraction of sister to brother and brother to sister.

ANDREA. Have you felt *that?*

ALLMERS. And you too. You too, Andrea. I am certain of that.

ANDREA. And now? What do you wish now?

ALLMERS. I wish that you and I should return to each other.

ANDREA (*trembling*). You and I!

ALLMERS. In the past you needed me. Now I need you. Do not let any one come between us. Promise me to continue being a sister to me.

ANDREA. I cannot, Alfred.

ALLMERS. You cannot!

ANDREA. No, not now. Not as you now are. I can no longer be like a sister to you.

ALLMERS. And why can you not?

ANDREA. Because I *am* not.

ALLMERS. What does that mean!

ANDREA. That I have no right to bear the name of Allmers.

ALLMERS. Andrea!

ANDREA. I have known it a long time. Now you know it too. And now we must part.

ALLMERS. No right to bear—! Tell me—! Explain——!

ANDREA. Not a word more! That is how it is.

ALLMERS (*sadly*). Oh, how unspeakably poor this makes me.

ANDREA. You might be so rich—so rich, Alfred.

ALLMERS. I! I rich!

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ANDREA. Yes, dear. For you have Rita, and you have the treasures of both sorrow and loss. (*She goes up the wood-path to the right.*)

ALLMERS (*to himself*). No sister, then.—And little Eyolf is at the mercy of the currents of the fiord.

(*He goes slowly up the path.*)

THIRD ACT

An elevation in ALLMERS'S *garden. At the back, a sheer cliff, with a railing along its edge. An extensive view over the fiord. A flag at half-mast, by the railing. A table, bench and garden chairs on the elevation. On the right, a summer-house. It is a late summer evening.*

(MISS ASTA ALLMERS *is sitting on a bench on the left, and appears to be waiting for some one. Her hands in her lap. After a while Engineer* BORGHEIM *comes up the slope at the back.*)

BORGHEIM. So I have found you at last!

ASTA. I have been sitting here waiting—

BORGHEIM. Not for me, have you?

ASTA. Yes. I have been waiting for you.

BORGHEIM (*coming nearer*). I may come, then?

ASTA. Yes, if you like.

BORGHEIM. And talk to you—once more?

ASTA. Yes. Or first—let me say something to you.

BORGHEIM (*standing before her*). Well?

ASTA. Are you going this eveinng?

BORGHEIM. I am going to-night. By the steamer. I must.

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ASTA. Yes, yes, I suppose you must. But you must understand me, Borgheim.

BORGHEIM. That is what I want so much to do.

ASTA. Oh, if one could divide one's self! Be in two places at the same time.

BORGHEIM (*with a subdued outburst*). If you could—what would you do?

ASTA. I should go with you——

BORGHEIM. You would——!

ASTA. With you. By the steamer to-night.

BORGHEIM. You would do that! Then after all——!

ASTA. But I *cannot* divide myself! I cannot let my brother go.

BORGHEIM. No, you have already told me that twice, Asta.

ASTA. And least of all now, when he has lost little Eyolf. For think of what he has been to me all my life——

BORGHEIM. Yes, of course I understand that, Asta. You consider it your duty——

ASTA. Oh no, it is not for that. Not because it is my duty——

BORGHEIM. But——?

ASTA. But because I love him, as—well, as I believe only a sister can love a brother.

BORGHEIM. And you think that is the deepest kind of love?

ASTA. Yes, I am almost sure it is. Because it is the purest—the most sacred.

BORGHEIM. Then what have you to say about a mother's love for her child?

ASTA. I have never known much of that.

BORGHEIM. What of a father's then?

ASTA. That I know nothing about. Do you?

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BORGHEIM. Yes, both a mother's and a father's. And I believe that is what has made me so light-hearted and happy. But then——?

ASTA. Then——?

BORGHEIM. Then I must make my roads alone.

ASTA. Oh, if I could be with you. Help you——

BORGHEIM. Would you, if you could?

ASTA. Yes, that I would.

BORGHEIM. But you cannot.

ASTA. Would you be content to have only half of me, Borgheim?

BORGHEIM. No, you must be utterly and entirely mine.

ASTA. Then I cannot.

(ALFRED ALLMERS *comes up from below.*)

ALLMERS (*stops and looks at them*). Aha, are you both here, you two!

BORGHEIM. You know that I am going to start to-night.

ALLMERS. Well, what then? Are you going alone?

BORGHEIM. Yes, I am. And I shall have to remain alone, too—hereafter.

ALLMERS. Alone. There is something terrible in being alone.

ASTA. Oh, but, Alfred, you are not!

ALLMERS. Am I not! I, who no longer have a child. —Nor a sister either.

ASTA (*anxiously*). Alfred, Alfred, you must not——

BORGHEIM. How can you say so? Have you not heard—your sister is not going away with me.

ALLMERS. It is all the same. Oh, Asta, I have you no longer. Not as I had before.

BORGHEIM (*looking at them in astonishment*). But I don't understand——

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ASTA. Yes, you have Alfred. Believe me—I shall always be the same to you as I have been.

ALLMERS. But I shall not!

ASTA (*shrinking back*). Ah——!

ALLMERS. Never bind yourself, Borgheim! There may come a time when you will regret it. But then it will be too late.

BORGHEIM. Never in this world could I regret anything here.

ALLMERS. Oh, it is incredible what changes a human being can undergo.

ASTA. Could not two people change together? Then they would none the less be one.

ALLMERS. Never rely upon that, Asta. That would be lifelong happiness.

(MRS. RITA ALLMERS *comes up the hill.*)

RITA. Oh, are you up here too, Alfred?

(*She is going again.*)

ALLMERS. No, stay, Rita. What did you want?

RITA. Only to walk and walk. I have no rest anywhere.

ALLMERS. Nor I either.

RITA. And then, we cannot even walk together.

ASTA. Oh, but cannot you? Try to.

RITA. That seems to be so utterly impossible now. We must each take our own way in future.

ALLMERS. I cannot bear the loneliness——

RITA. I see that. I know it. Feel it. Asta, you must never leave him.

ASTA. I!

BORGHEIM. Never!

RITA. No, he must have some one to lean upon.

ASTA. Oh, but you, Rita!

RITA. Not now. Something stands between us.

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ALLMERS. It must be got rid of—if we are to live.

RITA. It will never be got rid of. You thrive in the shade. And I must have sunshine. Stay with us, Asta.

ALLMERS. Do you wish it!

RITA. Yes, everything for your sake. Stay with him. And if I am a hindrance, I will give way.

ALLMERS. You shall never give way.

RITA. I have given way once before. Made way for my own child. Must not that be right?

ALLMERS. Oh, but—Rita!

RITA. You shall be our child, Asta. We will take you in the place of Eyolf. For we must have a child to draw us together.

ASTA (*looking at him*). What do you say, Alfred?

ALLMERS (*doubtfully*). I——?

RITA. You must! You must! What you need is a tranquil, warm, passionless feeling. A child or a sister.

ALLMERS (*with a glance at* ASTA). Ah, a sister——

ASTA. Do you wish me to remain here, Alfred?

ALLMERS. No, you must go.

RITA. You cannot!

ASTA. I will and must go away. This very evening.

RITA. Where are you going?

ASTA. At first only in to town. But afterwards——

BORGHEIM. Afterwards——?

ASTA. Far, far from here. (*Looks at* BORGHEIM *and gives him her hand.*) I am going with you.

BORGHEIM (*in radiant joy*). Will you, after all!

ASTA. To-morrow you shall hear everything. And then you must make your choice.

BORGHEIM. Oh, I care for nothing else if I have you, Asta!

RITA. Ah! That is how it is——!

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ASTA. Good-bye, Rita. (*Throwing her arms round her neck.*) And thanks for all your goodness. (*Offering her hand.*) Good-bye, Alfred.

ALLMERS (*opens his arms to her*). Asta——

ASTA (*shrinking back timidly*). Good-bye—good-bye! (*To* BORGHEIM.) Come, come. We must hurry.

(BORGHEIM *silently presses* ALLMERS'S *and* RITA'S *hands, and follows* ASTA *down from the hill.*)

ALLMERS (*standing at the railing and looking over the fiord*). There comes the steamer. Soon they will be gone.

RITA. And we two alone.

ALLMERS. It must be so.

RITA. Can we bear it?

ALLMERS. We must.

RITA. Yes, for Asta's sake.

ALLMERS (*looking at her*). For Asta's—? What do you mean?

RITA. She could not stay here. She, too, wished to be everything to you. As I did.

ALLMERS. For her own sake there was no need for her to go. But——

RITA. But——?

ALLMERS. For mine.

RITA. Alfred! You could think—desire—something criminal! Never!

ALLMERS (*shaking his head*). Oh no, nothing criminal. But there is a secret in the family——

RITA. In your family?

ALLMERS. Yes. Asta and I are free in every way.

RITA. And you have concealed this from me!

ALLMERS. I only learnt it to-day.

RITA. From her?

ALLMERS. Yes.

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RITA. And then she goes away.

ALLMERS. Yes, then she goes away.

RITA. And you did not ask her to remain——?

ALLMERS. It was better for us all that Asta should go.

RITA. How could you do it, Alfred? I should never have been able to do such a thing. Oh, but it is, as I was saying—the fishes' blood—. No, no—I don't mean it. It is what is great and pure in you that has gained the victory!

ALLMERS. Oh, it is a long way yet to the victory.

RITA. Then let us help each other.

ALLMERS. To find happiness again?

RITA. Not the happiness we have lost. We shall never find that again. But——

ALLMERS. But——?

RITA. Oh, I don't know, Alfred. But there must be something to put in its place.

ALLMERS. Something that would counterbalance the loss of happiness, do you mean?

RITA. Nothing that would equal happiness. But something that might make life livable.

ALLMERS. Then you will live your life by main force? At any price?

RITA. Yes, Alfred—I will. In spite of all! In spite of all.

ALLMERS (*after a short silence*). Rita—I wrote a few little verses this afternoon.

RITA. Could you do that?

ALLMERS. Yes, to-day I could. Would you like to hear them?

RITA. Yes, I should like to. Is it something about me?

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ALLMERS. About you as well. (*Seats himself on the bench.*) Come and sit down, and I will read them to you.

(*She seats herself on a chair by the table, opposite to him. He takes a piece of paper out of his breast pocket.*)

ALLMERS (*reads*).

They dwelt, these two, in so cosy a house
In autumn and winter weather.
Then came the fire—and the house was gone.
They must search the ashes together.

For down in the ashes a jewel lies hid,
Whose brightness the flames could not smother,
And search they but faithfully, he and she,
'Twill be found by one or the other.

But e'en though they find it, the gem they lost,
The enduring jewel they cherished—
She ne'er will recover her vanished peace—
Nor he the joy that has perished.

(*He looks questioningly at* RITA.) Did you understand that, Rita?

RITA (*rises*). Yes. And I understood, too, that you did not write those verses about me.

ALLMERS. About whom else——?

RITA. You wrote them about yourself and Asta.

ALLMERS. About little Eyolf in the first place——

RITA. Oh, not at all about the little Eyolf who lies out there, deep, deep down.

ALLMERS. Rita, Rita, how can you——

RITA. You wrote them about the other one. About her whom you used to call little Eyolf when she was a child.

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ALLMERS. Both for the big one and the little one. And for you too, Rita. I had to give expression to something that I can no longer bear in silence.

RITA. Would it help you if you were free of me?

ALLMERS. No.

RITA. And we cannot live together as man and wife either.

ALLMERS. No.

RITA. For little Eyolf might see it, perhaps. Who knows? And he must not see us living in happiness without him.

ALLMERS. Nor could we do so, Rita. Even if we wished.

RITA. No, we could not. (*Stops.*) But if we could call him to life again, Afred!

ALLMERS. What do you mean by that?

RITA. If we could make him live within us, I mean.

ALLMERS. Oh, he does live within us. In sorrow and heartache—and in remorse too.

RITA. Oh, sorrow and heartache and remorse—that is not life at all. They are not for Eyolf's childish soul. We must think of something that may fill him with quiet joy.

ALLMERS (*shaking his head with a sad smile*). As if he could see what we are about here!

RITA. Perhaps he can see, though—in his own way. We must live and act as though he were behind us. Looking at us. Seeing everything and understanding everything. All our actions and all our thoughts.

ALLMERS (*wringing his hands*). Oh, if he could have lived with us. Lived his own life. Now it is as though he had never existed. What was he doing here in the world, if he was not to——

RITA. He did not live in vain, nevertheless.

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ALLMERS. Oh, phrases, Rita. (*Pointing down over the railing.*) But listen to them down below. All the shrieking, yelling children. All those who let him go to destruction. And who did not help him.

RITA. They will all go to destruction too, Alfred. Go to destruction in their unhappy homes.

ALLMERS. Yes, I daresay you are right.

RITA. And we stand up here on our height and look on. And do not help them.

ALLMERS. We——?

RITA. We could help them, if we wished. But we do not.

ALLMERS (*looking before him*). That would be little Eyolf's revenge. To repay death with life.

RITA. Then he would not have lived in vain.

ALLMERS. Nor died in vain either.

RITA. If you will—we will do it, Alfred. Stand by one another like two faithful friends.

ALLMERS. Little Eyolf shall continue to live through us.

(*He goes to the flagstaff and hoists the flag to the top.*)

RITA. No more sign of death. That is a relief, Alfred. Oh, what a relief!

ALLMERS. Thanks for rousing me to this.

RITA. Thank little Eyolf.

ALLMERS. Yes, him first.—In deeds.

RITA. If only one does not demand happiness—at any price—I do not see why one should not be able to live one's life.

ALLMERS. Eyolf's memory will teach us how to live our lives.

RITA. Yes, yes, Alfred. And he himself will live in them.

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RITA. Yes, he is living with us. We will never more look for him down in the deep, dark, turbid current.

ALLMERS. He is not down there. He is up here on earth with us, unseen. Taking part in our daily life. Helping us to protect our uncertain, changeable human destinies.

RITA. And if now and then a mysterious Sabbath peace descends on our souls——?

ALLMERS. What then, Rita?

RITA. Do you not think it might be a visit from some one who is gone?

ALLMERS. Who knows? We will look for those who are gone. Perhaps we shall catch sight of them.

RITA. Little Eyolf. And big Eyolf. Where shall we look for them, Alfred?

ALLMERS. Upwards.

RITA (*nods in approval*). Yes, yes, upwards!

ALLMERS. Upwards—towards the stars. And towards the great silence.

RITA (*giving him her hand*). Thanks!

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JOHN GABRIEL BORKMAN

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FROM THE FIRST ACT

MRS. BORKMAN. He thinks, what is the truth, that you are ashamed of us—that you despise us. And do you pretend that you don't? Were you not once planning to adopt him? To make him change his name? Call himself Rentheim. Erhard Rentheim.

MISS RENTHEIM. That was at the height of the scandal—when the case was before the courts.

MRS. BORKMAN. Yes, then you wished me to lose my boy too. As I lost everything—everything else. I was only to be left with the dishonoured name. I alone. It was good enough for me to be called Borkman.

MISS RENTHEIM. I have no such designs now.

MRS. BORKMAN. And it would not matter if you had. For in that case what would become of his mission? No, thank you. Erhard no longer needs you. And therefore he is as good as dead to you—and you to him.

MISS RENTHEIM (*with an outburst*). Can you say that, Gunhild!

MRS. BORKMAN. He has promised me that. He has sworn it to me. Now you know it.

MISS RENTHEIM (*firmly, with resolution*). We shall see. For now I shall remain out here.

SECOND ACT

The great gallery on the first floor of the Borkman house. The walls are covered with faded tapestries, representing hunting-scenes, gods, shepherds and shepherdesses, all in faded colours. A folding-door to the

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left, and further forward a piano. In the left-hand corner, at the back, a door, cut in the tapestry, and covered with tapestry, without any frame. Against the middle of the right wall, a desk, with books and papers. Further forward on the same side, a sofa with a table and chairs in front of it. The furniture is all of a stiff Empire style. A lighted chandelier hangs from the ceiling.

(JENS BORKMAN *stands by the piano, with a music-stand in front of him, playing the violin.* FRIDA FOLDAL *sits at the instrument, accompanying him.*)

(BORKMAN *is a slender man of middle height, well on in the sixties. His appearance is distinguished, his profile finely cut; he has white hair and is clean-shaven. He is in evening dress, with a black coat and a white necktie.* FRIDA FOLDAL *is a girl of seventeen, pretty, pale, with a somewhat weary and overstrained expression. She is cheaply dressed in dark clothes.*)

(*They are playing the last bars of a piece of Beethoven.*)

BORKMAN (*lowers the violin and remains standing at the music-stand.*) It went passably well this evening. You are getting on, Miss Foldal.

FRIDA. Oh, I have had so little practice as yet, unfortunately. I am so badly wanting in proficiency.

BORKMAN. You have the fire of music in you. And to have fire in one's soul—that is the decisive thing. The decisive thing in every relation of life. (*Turning over the pages of the music book.*) Let me see—. What shall we take next——

FRIDA (*looks at her watch*). I beg your pardon, Mr. Borkman—but I am afraid I must go.——

BORKMAN. Are you going already?

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FRIDA (*rises*). I really must. I have an engagement this evening.

BORKMAN. Are you to play for dancing?

FRIDA. Yes, there is to be a dance after supper.

BORKMAN (*places his violin and bow on the piano*). Do you like playing dance music—in private circles, I mean?

FROM THE THIRD ACT

BORKMAN. But it does not know *why* I did it; why I *had* to do it. And that is what I want to explain.

MRS. BORKMAN. Reasons acquit no one.

BORKMAN. They may acquit one in one's own eyes.

MRS. BORKMAN. Oh, let all that alone. I have thought over that business enough and to spare.

BORKMAN. I too. During those six years in my cell I had time to think it over. And during the eight years up there in the gallery I have had still more ample time. I have gone over the whole case again—by myself. I have turned every one of my actions upside down and inside out. Backwards and forwards. And the final judgment I have come to is this: the one person I have sinned against is—myself.

MRS. BORKMAN. And what about me? What about your son?

BORKMAN. You and he are included in what I mean when I say myself.

MRS. BORKMAN. And what about the hundreds of others, then—the people they say you have ruined?

BORKMAN. I had power in my hands. And these others did not concern me.

MRS. BORKMAN. No, no, there may be something in that.

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BORKMAN. If the others had had the power, do you think they would not have acted exactly as I did?

MRS. BORKMAN. They would not—most of them.

FROM THE FOURTH ACT

ELLA RENTHEIM. A long sleep, I think!

MRS. BORKMAN. Ella! (*To* THE MAID.) Go for help. Men and horses.

(THE MAID *goes out to the right.*)

MRS. BORKMAN (*behind the bench*). The night air has killed him.

ELLA RENTHEIM. So it appears. Will you not look at him?

MRS. BORKMAN. No, no, no. He could not stand the fresh air.

ELLA RENTHEIM (*nods slowly*). It must be so. The cold has killed him.

MRS. BORKMAN. Oh, Ella, the cold had killed him long ago.

ELLA RENTHEIM. Us too.

MRS. BORKMAN. You are right.

ELLA RENTHEIM. We are three dead beings—we three here.

MRS. BORKMAN. We are. And now I think we two may hold out our hands to each other, Ella.

ELLA RENTHEIM (*quietly*). Over the third. Yes.

(MRS. BORKMAN *behind the bench, and* ELLA RENTHEIM *in front of it, take each other's hand.*)

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WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN

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NOTES AND DRAFT

The first act passes in the summer. Fashionable bathing establishment on the sea coast.

Second act up at a health resort, high in the mountains.

Third act among glaciers and precipices on the western slope.

He is a sculptor. Elderly. Famous. Newly married. Returning from honeymoon. He has taken her "up into a high mountain and shown her all the glory of the world." And so he won her. She is young, bright and joyous. They are both radiantly happy. Now he will begin to enjoy life.

Then it is that he meets "his first love" at the bathing establishment. The one he has forgotten. She who has never forgotten. Clad in white. Accompanied by her nurse. She was of rich family. Left her home and went away with him, the young, poor, unknown future artist. Became his model. Then she broke with him and left him. Has since been married to another and divorced. Then married again. He committed suicide. All this happened abroad.

CHARACTERS

The Doctor at the Baths, an intelligent man, still young.

The Inspector at the Baths. Fussy. Goes about among the visitors, spreading gossip.

The Gossiping Lady from the capital. Has the reputation among the visitors of being extremely amusing. Malicious from thoughtlessness.

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MANY VISITORS at the Baths, with their CHILDREN.
A Waiter at the Bath Hotel.
Waitresses.
The Sportsman from the mountains.
Stubow. Rambow.
Professor Erik Stubow, famous sculptor.

SCENARIO

Stubow and Maia.

The former and the Inspector.

The former and the strange lady in white with her nurse. They go into the pavilion.

The former, the lady from the capital and other ladies. The ladies go off after a short scene.

The mountain sportsman arrives with his servant and dogs from the steamer. Servant and dogs out to the right.

Stubow, Maia, the Sportsman and the Inspector.

The Sportsman and Maia out to the right.

The strange lady in from the left.

The Inspector goes into the hotel.

The lady and Stubow alone. Dialogue.

Maia comes back. The lady off.

Stubow and Maia decide to go to the mountain health resort.

In this country only the mountains give an echo, not the men and women.

He was a diplomatist, a distinguished Russian [Bulgarian] diplomatist. Him I managed to drive out of his mind, mad, incurably mad. It was great sport while it was in the doing. I could have laughed within me. If I had anything within me.

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So that was Herr von Satow.

No, my second husband was called Satow. He was a Russian.

And where is he

I have killed him.

Killed!

Killed him with a fine sharp dagger which I had with me in bed

[Don't believe you

Indeed you may believe it]

Have you never had children.

Yes, many children

And where are they now

I killed them.

Now you are telling lies, Irene. [All this.]

Killed them [murdered them pitilessly] as soon as they came into the world. [Long, long before.] One after the other.

Religious brooding?

No, I have never——

Some of the strings of your nature have broken.

Does not that always happen when a human being dies?

First became famous through Irene—Now he will live and enjoy his youth over again with another. Then he alters the statue into a group. Irene becomes a secondary figure in the work that made him famous——

First a single statue; then a group. Then she left him.

Our life was not that of two human beings

What was it then

Only that of artist and model.

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2nd ACT.

Children playing on the upland.

Professor Rubek is sitting on the bench and looking at their play.

Maia comes to look for him. Scene between them.

Irene with a band of children advances over the upland.

The bear hunter comes and fetches Maia.

Irene and Rubek. Great scene.

Something is locked up in me
You took the key with you

When we dead awaken——
What do we see then?
We see that we have never lived.

U. Come down again as fast as you can
The mist is upon us

We will go up above the mists.
But you must pass through them first

Oh, how I shall rejoice and sing, if I get down with a whole skin

The hut by the Lake of Taunitz. There it lies

Great, white swans are dipping their necks in the water.

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THE RESURRECTION DAY

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

HENRIK IBSEN

1899

FROM THE THIRD ACT

MAIA (*interrupting*). Was it not a strange chance that we four should meet here on the wild mountain side?

PROFESSOR RUBEK. You with an eagle-shooter, and I with—(*to* IRENE)—well, what do I come with?

IRENE. With a shot eagle.

MAIA. Shot?

IRENE. Shot in the wing, Mrs. Rubek.

MAIA. Rubek—there seems to be something good and reconciling in our meeting here for the last time.

PROFESSOR RUBEK. Never to see each other again. If you wish the same as I do.

MAIA. With all my heart I do.

ULFHEIM. Then all is well. I would rather have carried her off—by force—violently—but let that be——

MAIA. Then I will say good-bye to you, Rubek.

PROFESSOR RUBEK. I have done you a great wrong. I, too, have taken you by force——

MAIA. Yes, when you bought me——

PROFESSOR RUBEK (*nods*). —bought you, in spite of all the ferment of open-air life in you.

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MAIA. And if you now set me free so easily [and cheerfully], it is because you want to be free yourself.

PROFESSOR RUBEK. Yes, I could not bear it any longer.

MAIA. If we had not been joined together in wedlock, as it is called, you would have borne it longer.

PROFESSOR RUBEK. You too! You too, Maia. You have spent days and nights regretting it.

ULFHEIM. Don't think of that now. Here we meet and here we part. Here we will hold our feast.

MAIA. A feast here? Where will you get the champagne from, Mr. Ulfheim?

ULFHEIM. Champagne? *Must* there be champagne?

MAIA. Nothing less will do!

ULFHEIM. Then, upon my soul, you shall have it!

(*He takes a key from his pocket, opens the door of the shooting hut and goes in.*)

MAIA (*looking after him*). What is he doing now?

PROFESSOR RUBEK. He is making a clatter with knives and forks. And with glasses. He is preparing the feast for us.

(ULFHEIM *comes out, bringing a tray covered with a cloth, with bottles of wine and cold meats, and puts it down on the stone table.*)

MAIA. But what in the world——!

ULFHEIM. You will have to take pot luck, ladies and gentlemen. This was really intended only for two. But our guests are welcome. (ULFHEIM *opens a bottle of champagne.*) [(*softly.*) Lars is a good fellow. He knows me. Looks after everything.]

MAIA (*in a half whisper*). Oh, you base criminal!

ULFHEIM. No reproaching your comrade. (*Pouring out the wine.*) Only intended for two, as I said. We

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men must make shift with beer glasses. (*Hands the glasses round and raises his glass.*) Your health, ladies and gentlemen! (*To* MAIA.) What shall the toast be, Madam?

MAIA. Freedom shall be the toast!

(*She empties her glass at one draught.*)

PROFESSOR RUBEK. Yes, let freedom be the toast.

(*He empties his glass.*)

IRENE. And a toast for those who have the courage to use it.

(*She sips at her glass and throws the rest on the ground.*)

ULFHEIM. Thanks for the toast, Madam. I take it for myself. For *I* have never lacked courage to use my freedom! (*He drinks and fills the glasses again.*) And now a toast to the hunt for the new life! I have a castle to offer her who follows me——

MAIA. No castle! I won't own it!

ULFHEIM. You may want it in time. In a year or two perhaps all the rest will be done with.

MAIA. Hurrah! Then we shall be altogether free.

(*Empties her glass.*)

ULFHEIM. Then we shall only have this hut left.

MAIA. We can set fire to that. Burn it down any day we like.

ULFHEIM. But first live—live in it!

MAIA. Live the new life, yes!

ULFH. And now we take our leave.

PROF. R. No doubt we shall meet down at the hotel.

ULF. Scarcely. Before you come down, I shall be gone.

PROF. R. Are you going with him, Maia?

M. Yes, I am going with him.

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PROF. R. And we are going further over the mountains.

ULF. Shall we not warn him?

M. (*struggling for a moment with herself*). No. Let him choose his own way.

ULFH. (*raising his hat*). A pleasant trip among the mountains.

(*Silent leave-takings are exchanged.* ULFHEIM *and* MAIA *begin to descend the precipice at the back.*)

ULFH. Take care. It is a deadly dangerous way we are going.

M. (*between jest and earnest*). You must take the responsibility for us both.

(*They continue to climb down and are no longer seen.*)

PROF. R. [(*with a breath of relief*). Now I am free!] So lightly and cheerfully could she leave me.

IRENE. She is awakened.

PROF. R. Awakened?

IRENE. From life's deep, heavy sleep. Even as she descends into the ravine, she is being carried upwards towards her bright native heights—without her knowing it.

PROF. R. To me she is dead. Then let her live [—or rest].

IRENE. Did you not murder her a little every day —when you were living together?

PROF. R. I?

IRENE. As you murdered me a little every day. Sucked her blood too—to support yourself——

PROF. R. Never! Against you I have sinned. But never against her. Never against any other.

IRENE. Then perhaps that very thing was death to her.

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PROF. R. No one else in the world concerns us. We can now be everything to each other.

IRENE. Now!

PROF. R. Yes, now. Come, Irene, before we go home we will climb up on yonder peak and look far out over the country and all its glory.

IRENE. Driving clouds are sweeping up the mountain side.

PROF. R. But the peak rises clear of them.

IRENE. And you will go up there?

PROF. R. With you. I will live the resurrection day and reshape it in a new image—in your image, Irene.

IRENE. In mine——?

PROF. R. In yours, as you now are.

IRENE. And do you know what I am now?

PROF. R. Be what you please. For me, you are what I see in you.

IRENE. I have stood on the turn-table [in the glare of electric lamps, amid the blaring of trumpets], naked, and made a show of myself to hundreds of men- after you.

PROF. R. It was I that drove you to the turn-table—blind as I then was—I, who placed the dead clay-image above the happiness of life—of love—not a hairsbreadth has this lowered you in my eyes.

IRENE. Nor in my own. But the desire of life is dead in me. Now I have arisen, and see that life lies dead. All life lies on its bier—(*The clouds sink slowly down like a damp mist.*) See how the shroud is closing in on us! But I *will* not die again, Arnold!—Save me! Save me, if you can and will!

PROF. R. Up above the mists I have a glimpse of the mountain peak. It stands there glittering in the sunrise

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—there it is we must go—through the mists of night up into the light of morning.

(*The mists close in thicker and thicker over the scene.* R. *and* IRENE *step down into the veil of mist and are gradually lost to sight.*)

(*The head of the* SISTER OF MERCY *appears, searching, in a rift in the mist.*)

(*High up above the sea of mist the mountain peak shines in the morning sun.*)

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